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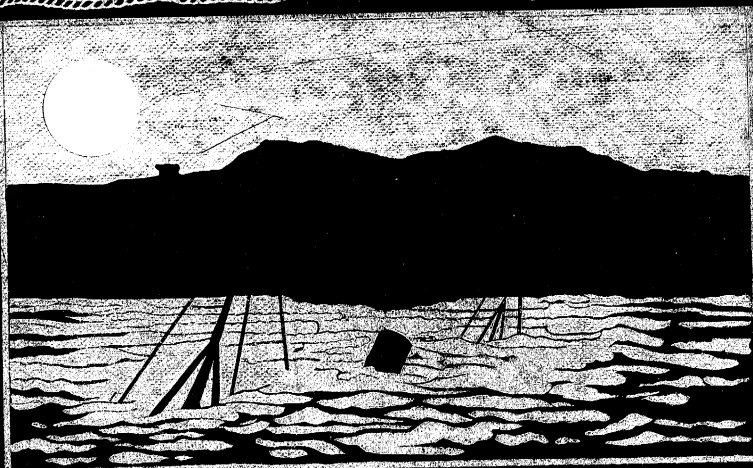
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THE
SINKING
OF THE
"MERRIMAC"

RICHMOND
PEARSON
HOBSON

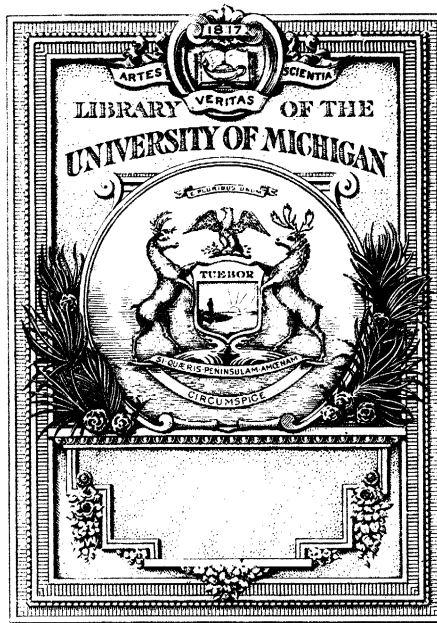
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THE SINKING
OF THE
"MERRIMAC"

BY NAVAL
CONSTRUCTOR
HOBSON



THE SINKING OF THE
“MERRIMAC”

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RICHMOND PEARSON HOBSON,
NAVAL CONSTRUCTOR, U. S. N.



THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

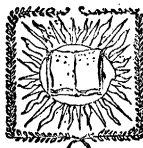
A PERSONAL NARRATIVE

OF THE ADVENTURE IN THE HARBOR OF SANTIAGO DE CUBA, JUNE 3, 1898,
AND OF THE SUBSEQUENT IMPRISONMENT OF THE SURVIVORS

BY

RICHMOND PEARSON HOBSON

NAVAL CONSTRUCTOR, U. S. N.



NEW YORK
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1899

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TO
REAR-ADMIRAL
WILLIAM T. SAMPSON
U. S. N.

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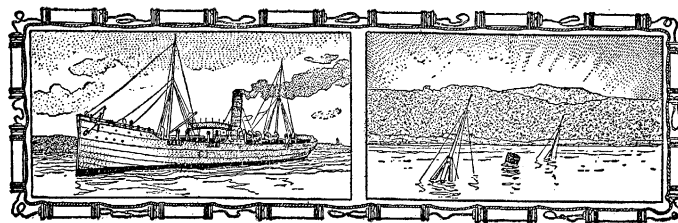
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THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"



THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

PART I

THE SCHEME AND THE PREPARATIONS

A suggestion from San Juan—"Unsinkables" for Havana—Admiral Sampson announces his purpose—The plan of feigning a chase; why discarded—The plan of stealing in adopted—Two methods of sinking the collier—The torpedoes—Arrangement of the torpedoes—The firing of the torpedoes—The general plan of the manœuver—Other details—Arrival at Santiago and reconnoitering—Inspecting the *Merrimac*—Hundreds of volunteers—Chaos on the *Merrimac*—Trouble with anchors and chains—Final preparations under difficulties—The *Merrimac's* flag—Trial trip and inspection—The first attempt; off at last—The recall and postponement.

ON May 29, 1898, Admiral Sampson's flagship, the *New York*, lay at Key West, outside the reef, hurriedly coaling from lighters on both sides. The *Oregon*, just arrived after her notable voyage around Cape Horn, lay near at hand, coaling with equal

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

despatch. It was evident to all that an urgent purpose and a definite objective were in mind.

A few days before, the flagship had suddenly left the squadron patrolling along the mouths of the channels of the Bahamas, and had run full speed to Key West. Despatches had come on board giving information that the Spanish fleet, under Admiral Cervera, had put into Santiago harbor; but evidently Admiral Sampson's anxiety was not relieved, for he left the squadron under Commodore Watson to guard the approaches to Havana, despatched the *New Orleans* to Commodore Schley on the south of Cuba, and went post-haste to the nearest coaling-station, taking his flagship alone.

The admiral's purpose was not known to me, but the circumstances of the coaling showed clearly that distant service was in view. I deemed it proper, before leaving for such service, to make known to him certain features of a plan relating to the prospective reduction of Havana, the details of which, if it should be adopted, would require early attention; and it was while I was making this report that the admiral first proposed to me his scheme of sinking the *Merrimac* at Santiago.

The reduction of so strongly garrisoned a city by land forces would involve enormous loss of life, but our armored vessels, under cover of night, could run the formidable fortifications, if only the mines and torpedoes could be disposed of. For many

THE SCHEME AND THE PREPARATIONS

weeks, as assistant naval constructor with the fleet, I had been studying the elements of strength and weakness in our own vessels and the vessels of the enemy, particularly from the standpoint of stability and fire service in battle, and I had made special reports to the admiral upon each vessel. This investigation showed that our vessels were particularly weak before torpedo or mine attack. In fact, the *New York*, the *Wilmington*, and the *Helena* were about the only vessels of the admiral's squadron that could stand a single torpedo blow, and these vessels were among those least adapted for standing the fire of fortifications. The vessels best adapted for running fortifications, the monitors, would sink like a shot under the blow of a torpedo.

This fact had been emphasized during the action at San Juan, Porto Rico, on May 12. It became evident, after three hours' bombardment, that the fortifications could not be reduced at ranges above two thousand yards, and could be reduced at short ranges only after heavy loss. It appeared to me that the best method of reducing San Juan was to run by the fortifications into the harbor. The entrance, of course, was mined, and it was reported, on good authority, that a vessel had been sunk in such a way as to leave only a narrow space for passage, this narrow space itself being heavily mined. Soon after the bombardment I had reported to the admiral on a method of going in, asking to be allowed

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

to take two steam-launches with volunteer crews, to start about midnight, and slip in close under the shore through the neck from the westward, and then come out by the main channel, dragging it, sweeping the mines, and locating sunken vessels, the exit of the launches to be followed by the entrance of the armored vessels. The admiral had listened to the proposition kindly and apparently with approval, but had replied that until the enemy's fleet was met he could not risk even a single vessel, and that, under the conditions, it was evident that the sweeping of the channel could be only partial at best.

I then had set to work on the problem of clearing a channel of torpedoes and mines. The result was the outline design of a craft specially constructed to be unsinkable, having the general form of an iron canal-boat, operating by its own motive power, rendered unsinkable by being stowed with air-tight cans a foot long, and made indestructible by special arrangements in construction and by the use of wire cables. I had elaborated a plan for the use of five such unsinkable craft, to precede the fleet in entering the harbor of Havana. As the construction and preparation of the unsinkables would require six weeks or two months, I thought it best to make report of my plan to the admiral before the departure from Key West. I did so on May 29.

After listening with attention to the plans, the



Drawn from life by Cecilia Beaux, at Glen Ridge, N. J., August 30, 1888.
REAR-ADMIRAL WILLIAM T. SAMPSON, U. S. N.

THE SCHEME AND THE PREPARATIONS

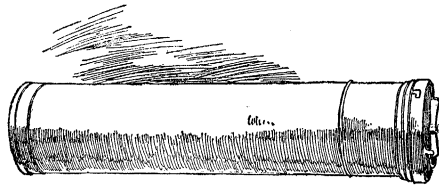
admiral said that at the time it was not a question of how to make a vessel unsinkable while entering an enemy's harbor protected by mines, torpedoes, and artillery, but how to make a vessel sink in an enemy's harbor, and make her sink swiftly and surely; that it was "not a question of an unsinkable, but of a sinkable"; not a question of Havana, but of Santiago; and that at a subsequent date he would consider the question of unsinkables.

He then confided to me that he was about to start for Santiago, where Admiral Cervera's fleet had taken refuge, and that he intended to sink a collier in the channel, stating that he had, indeed, already ordered the commanding officer off Santiago to sink such a collier, naming the *Merrimac*, which was then on the south side of Cuba, but scarcely expected to find it done, though the order had been sent by the *New Orleans*.

He then asked how an iron ship could be scuttled and made to sink quickly. After thinking over the question for some time I replied, in effect, that there seemed to be two effective methods, one to drive off bottom plates from the inside, and the other to explode a series of torpedoes placed advantageously on the outside. We examined the chart of the harbor together, and I expressed full confidence in the practicability of putting the vessel into the channel, and stated that I should be happy

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

to be allowed to endeavor to carry out the work. The admiral then instructed me to study the question in detail and report to him. This was on the morning of May 29. I studied the subject during the afternoon and evening, and thought about it during the night. We got under way about midnight, and stood to the southward, the *Oregon* having already left. We were off Havana early in the



SHAPE OF THE TORPEDOES USED TO SINK THE "MERRIMAC."

morning, were joined by the *Oregon* and the *Mayflower*, and stood to the eastward at full speed.

My study included the complete plans, the choice of circumstances, and the navigation and manœuvring of the vessel, as well as the method of sinking her. All these features were reported upon, and the plans being approved by the admiral, preliminary preparations were begun on the 30th.

Various plans were considered. That of feigning a chase suggested itself from the fact that Spanish colliers were supposed to be on their way to Santiago. One had recently been captured by the *St. Paul*, and from her it was learned that others were

THE SCHEME AND THE PREPARATIONS

soon expected. By this method the *Merrimac* would approach by night from the eastward; when about five miles away she would be discovered by blockading vessels, search-lights would be thrown toward her, and fire opened, care being taken to shoot wide and to throw the lights in front and on the sides, in order to show the splash of striking projectiles.

The *Merrimac*, upon discovery, would bear in toward the shore to within about two thousand yards, apparently to seek the shelter of batteries; she would throw pitch on the fires to make heavy black smoke, as if forcing her speed to the utmost. She would head in toward the entrance and turn full down the course for entering the channel, blowing her whistle in blasts as of fright and distress. The search-light would flash across and show a Spanish flag at her peak. On approaching, the lights would be thrown on the entrance to facilitate her navigation, but care would be taken not to allow them to rest upon her. The shore batteries which should fire on the chasing vessels would be replied to and thus kept diverted. If they opened on the *Merrimac*, search-lights would be thrown in the gunners' faces.

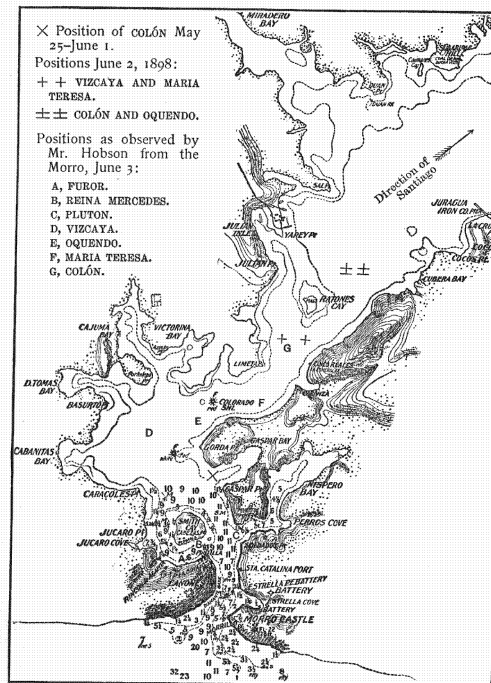
However, an examination of the chart showed the difficulties of navigation to be so great that no sane captain would attempt to take in a collier at night or under circumstances that did not admit of the utmost deliberation. It was known that tugs

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

were used by single-screw vessels of any size on account of the turn in the channel abreast Estrella Point. (See map, page 11.) The chances seemed to be against the enemy's being deceived, and navigation depending upon search-lights would entail chances of failure.

This plan, and various other plans involving the coöperation of the fleet, were discarded in favor of the simpler plan of going in alone by moonlight, just before the moon should set. Surprise, under any condition, could be only partial at best, since a certain amount of light was absolutely necessary for navigation. The conditions for surprise would be more favorable toward daybreak. Moreover, a flood-tide must be chosen, so that, in case of breaking the anchor-gear, the vessel would be set into the channel and have ample time for sinking before the ebb could tend to throw her out, while the chances of being carried by the tide through the whole length of the narrow channel into the inner harbor were very small. The "establishment of the port," or time of high tide, was about eight hours and a quarter, so that the tide would be running strong flood as the moon set. The moon was then approaching full, and calculations showed that on Thursday, June 2, it would set at Santiago at about half-past three. We were speeding at nearly thirteen knots,—the *Oregon* had demonstrated her ability to maintain that speed,—and we should





Drawn by D. B. Keeler from a United States Government Chart.

MAP OF THE ENTRANCE TO SANTIAGO HARBOR.

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

therefore arrive off Santiago early Wednesday morning and have most of the day and night of Wednesday for preparations. Thursday was therefore set for entering, though the admiral expressed the opinion that it would be found impossible to complete the preparations in time. The special advantage of Thursday was that there would be an interval of darkness of about an hour and a quarter between the time of moonset and daybreak, while on Friday this interval would be reduced to about half an hour, and on Saturday day would break before moonset. It will be understood that an interval of darkness, though short, might be found of advantage for completing the work or for making escape.

Preparations were therefore begun at once, the greatest amount of detail being required for the process of sinking.

Investigation had shown that the two methods of sinking the vessel that first suggested themselves were the only ones practicable—that of driving off bottom plates by forces applied from the inside, and that of using a series of torpedoes on the outside. Both of these methods were reported on to the admiral, my recommendation being in favor of the torpedoes.

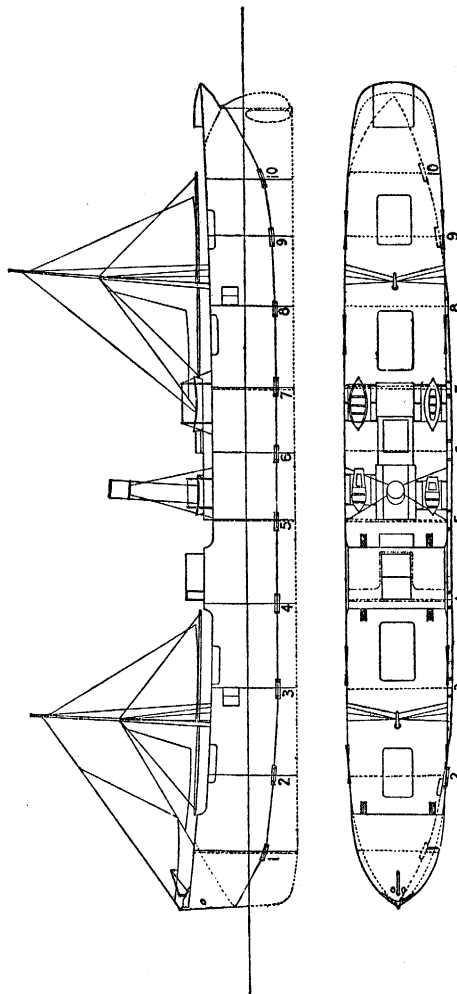
The method of driving off bottom plates consisted in selecting six plates in advantageous positions along the length, about twelve to fifteen feet below

THE SCHEME AND THE PREPARATIONS

the water-line, cutting off all rivet-heads on the inside, leaving the plates simply held in place, then placing a small improvised cannon near the center of each plate, with cross-bars to distribute the force of the explosion and cause the plate to be blown off whole in each case, instead of merely causing a hole to be blown through it. This improvised cannon was to be nothing more than a short length of nine-inch piping, containing black powder, rammed tight, and held by a strut carried up to the deck-beam above, with wedges under the heel, the powder being fired at will by an ordinary electric primer.

It was explained to the admiral that the cutting off of rivet-heads would be difficult under the circumstances and would involve two, if not three, days' delay; in consequence only the torpedo method was practicable for Thursday or Friday. The latter method, therefore, was the one adopted.

This method was to arrange ten torpedoes on the port side, placed outside abreast the bulkheads and the cargo-hatches so as to give the maximum sinking effect to a breach opened up by each, the torpedoes being carried by a fore-and-aft belt-line extending along the outside from end to end about twelve feet below water, each torpedo, in addition, having a hogging- or girth-line, extending around underneath the keel, for holding the torpedo in its place. The purpose of the fore-and-aft



PLAN AND ELEVATION OF THE "MERRIMAC," SHOWING ARRANGEMENT OF THE TORPEDOES, ON THE PORT SIDE.

Before entering the channel Nos. 7, 9, and 10 were reported useless. The ones actually exploded were Nos. 1 and 5. The batteries of the others were shattered by the Spanish fire.

THE SCHEME AND THE PREPARATIONS

belt-line was to take up the strain due to resistance in the water.

The form of torpedo selected, after considering all the forms available under the circumstances, was the simple eight-inch charge in its own can or tank, to be fired by its own electric primer. The use of guncotton, placed inside as well as out, was considered and discarded. Various difficulties were encountered in the preparation of the torpedoes, important among which was the arrangement for insuring water-tightness in connection with the admission of the wire cable through the can or tank for the purpose of firing. The charge selected was what is known as the reduced charge, being about seventy-eight pounds of brown prismatic powder, this quantity being large compared with the quantities used effectively for torpedoes in previous warfare. The eight-inch charge was made up of two parts in serge sacks or bags, as shown on page 20. The tank was as long as the tank for the full charge, and this left the requisite amount of space for arranging for water-tightness. The charge for the torpedo was arranged to be fired by the electric primer, carried in a small bag of four pounds of quick black powder, this bag being in the center between the two charges, as indicated in the sketch, the insulated wire cable passing from the primer through the mouth of the small sack, and up along and outside of one of the charges. On top of the

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

upper charge were placed two white-pine disks, seven eighths of an inch in thickness, fitting the can more or less tightly, each disk having a hole in

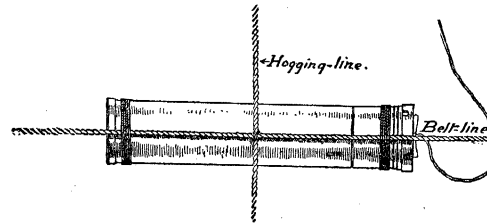


DIAGRAM SHOWING THE ATTACHMENT OF THE TORPEDOES
TO THE BELT-LINE AND THE HOGGING-LINE.

the center for the passage of the wire cable. On top of these disks, and for a depth of about nine inches of the can, was poured hot a gummy substance made up of pitch and tallow, which, while warm, would close all openings and make a substance entirely water-tight, and which, in hardening, would still be pliable and spongy and not easily cracked, acting also as additional insulation for the wire cable passing through it. Care was taken to examine whether this pitch composition, poured in hot, would burn the insulation off the wire; but no difficulty of the sort was met with.

The question of making the cans water-tight had been the subject of a conference with the admiral, in which at first he had suggested the use of paraffin; but not having paraffin on board, the mixture of

THE SCHEME AND THE PREPARATIONS

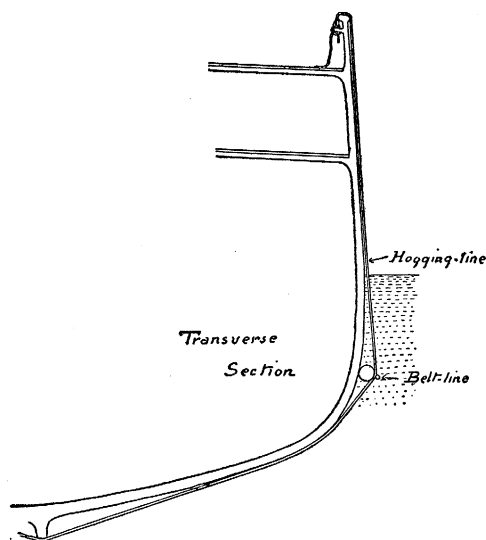
tallow and pitch was decided upon, with the addition of gum from rubber gaskets intermingled, if it were found necessary to reduce the brittleness. The top of the tank was left the same as usual, only a hole large enough to admit of the passage of the cable was drilled in the center. At the bottom of the can was a short thickness of mineral wool.

The preparation of the torpedoes was begun at once, Gunner Morgan of the *New York* and the gunner's gang being detailed for its execution.

The torpedoes, ten in number, were to be secured on the port side at the points determined upon for producing the maximum sinking effect, being held by the belt-line, extending entirely around the vessel from forward aft at a depth of about twelve feet below the water, as above mentioned, the torpedoes lying lengthwise along this belt-line. (See plan on page 14.) The wire-cable end or head of the torpedo was pointed aft, in order to reduce the chances of leakage, the eddy created by the torpedo reducing the water-pressure at the hole. In addition, as was mentioned above, each torpedo had a hogging- or girth-line extending completely around the ship, by which the torpedo was kept close in to the side and at the proper depth. Two lashings in addition were placed near the ends of each torpedo, securing it more tightly to the belt-line. Torpedo No. 1 was abreast the collision bulkhead, No. 2 abreast the forward cargo-hatch, No. 3 abreast the large space

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

forward of the boiler-room, No. 4 abreast the forward boiler-room bulkhead, No. 5 abreast the forward engine-room bulkhead, and so on from forward aft, the positions being chosen, as has already been



TRANSVERSE SECTION OF THE "MERRIMAC," SHOWING POSITION
OF THE BELT-LINE HOLDING THE TORPEDOES
AND OF THE HOGGING-LINE.

stated, so as to give the maximum sinking effect. All were placed on the port side, because, in turning with the port helm, it would be the forward side, so to speak, making the inrush of water more rapid than would be the case on the starboard side. At

THE SCHEME AND THE PREPARATIONS

the same time, the fact that all the torpedoes were on the same side would cause a list to port, making the water reach more quickly the level of the cargo-ports, and would tend in every way to cause the sinking to be more rapid, while the vessel, being without longitudinal bulkheads, would right herself finally as she went under in deep water. Besides, the crew would abandon the ship from the starboard side.

The cables from all the torpedoes were led up to the bridge, and from this position all were to be exploded simultaneously at a given moment.

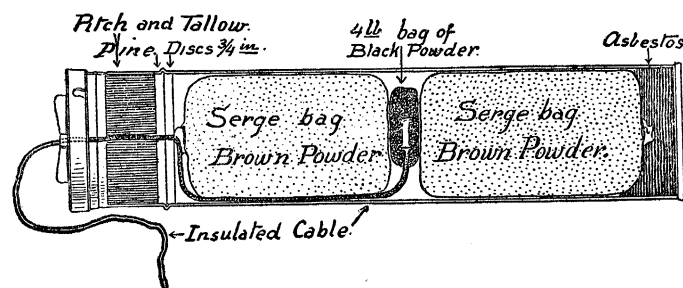
With a view to affording an additional guaranty of sinking, the sea connections were to be prepared for opening, and all apertures forward and aft were to be opened—all doors, hatches, and manholes on the inside, and the cargo-ports in the sides.

The question of firing the torpedoes involved a serious difficulty. Signals were made to the *Oregon* and the *Mayflower*, accompanying us, for an electric machine; but neither of these vessels had such a machine, nor did we have one on board the *New York*. It was evident that unless we should find that some vessel of Commodore Schley's Flying Squadron had such a machine, it would be necessary to fire by batteries, which are particularly fragile; and in such case it was decided to increase the number of cells far beyond the ordinary number required to fire the primers. The questions of

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

wiring and of the amount of cable required careful attention.

These details of the program were approved by the admiral. There was one feature, however, which he did not approve. It seemed to me that there was an element of weakness in the firing of the torpedoes. The number of torpedoes had been fixed at ten, which at first might seem excessive. I estimated that if all of them went off the vessel would sink in a minute and a quarter. The number



SECTIONAL DRAWING OF A TORPEDO.

was made large because of the innate weakness of the firing arrangements and the probability of injury before the time for firing. I requested the admiral to allow me to take in addition two warheads from the torpedoes on the *New York* and place them inside the *Merrimac*, abreast of the two most important bulkheads, leading their connections up inside, where they could not be injured by

THE SCHEME AND THE PREPARATIONS

the enemy's fire, thus having at hand at all times a positive means of instantly sinking the ship. When these war-heads were asked for the admiral pondered a moment and then said: "No, I cannot let you have them; two hundred pounds of guncotton on the inside would blow everything to the devil." Those who know the uniformly temperate language of the admiral will understand the emphasis of this reply.

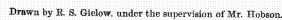
The parts of the program pertaining to navigation had been studied in connection with the chart of the harbor and the pilotage publications. The difficulties of navigation were of even greater consequence than those associated with the sinking of the vessel. Referring to the map, it will be seen that the entrance is very narrow, and that, with the slightest deviation or error, the shoal water on the left, near the course of the channel, would cause a failure to enter. Once entered, however, the conditions of the long, narrow channel were favorable for obstruction for some distance. It would therefore be necessary to have the vessel pointed fair, with sufficient speed at the entrance to insure complete control with the helm. The length of the *Merrimac* was about 333 feet, and the width of the channel in the narrow portions ranged from 350 to 450 feet. It would be necessary, therefore, after swinging the vessel athwart the channel, to catch and hold her in this position. The depth of the

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

channel varied from about five fathoms to ten or eleven fathoms; the vessel would draw about seventeen feet, and the most advantageous position for swinging was carefully chosen. There being only a short distance in which to overcome the speed of the vessel, special elastic arrangements would be necessary to enable the anchor-gear to check and absorb the speed, so as to catch and hold the vessel in the athwart position. To realize this elasticity, and at the same time to enable the anchor and chain to work automatically, the chain would be roused up out of the lockers and ranged along the deck. After running out a certain length the chain would begin to break elastic-rope stops, one end of the stop being made fast to the chain, the other to a long rope hawser of larger size, so that each stop before breaking would bring into play the elasticity of the large hawser, which itself would be finally broken.

The manoeuvre decided upon and approved by the admiral was to approach at full speed, stopping a short distance from the entrance, so that the speed on arriving at the point for the final manoeuvre would be about from four and a half to five knots. (See plan, page 23.) At this point, position A, the helm would be put hard aport. As soon as the ship began to swing, the starboard bow-anchor would be let go with sixty fathoms of chain; when about in position B, the starboard stern-anchor

would be let drop with forty fathoms of chain, the two permitting the ship to take position C, where she would be lying on a span directly athwart. Any additional motion still remaining would be absorbed by the vessel sticking her nose into the



PLAN OF THE MANEUVER AS PROJECTED.

A, Position for putting helm apart and dropping bow-anchor; B, Position for dropping stern-anchor; C, Position athwart, riding to span.

shoal on the right side of the channel. If the stern anchor-chain were carried away the movement would cause the vessel to throw her port quarter

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

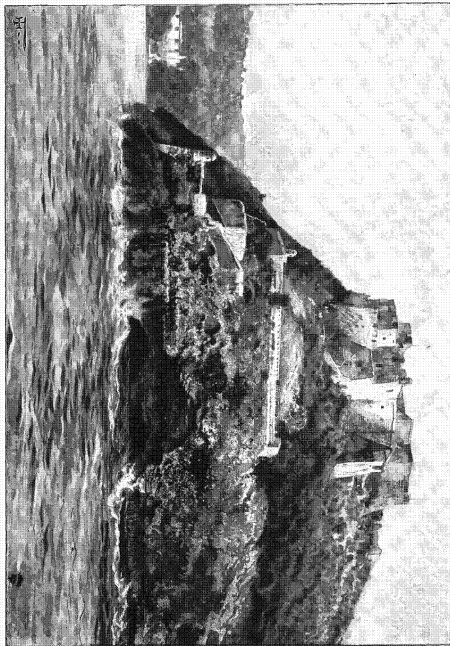
into the shoal on the port side, the bank being only one and a quarter fathoms deep.

The general plan contemplated a minimum crew of volunteers for its execution, with the simplest form of duty for each member to perform. The anchors were to be slung over the sides and held by simple lashings, ready to be cut with an ax, a man being stationed at each anchor. Only two men were to be kept below, one in the engine-room and one in the boiler-room. One man was to be at the wheel and one was to assist with the torpedoes, making in all a crew of six men.

The signaling was to be by cord pulls. The men were to lie on their faces at their separate stations, with the end of a cord wrapped around the wrist, awaiting the pull from the bridge, where all the cords were to converge. A simple pull would mean to "stand by"; then three steady, deliberate pulls in succession would be the signal for action.

The plan contemplated having a life-boat in tow at the stern, with a long painter, or line, leading forward. After the performance of duty the first man was to pull in the long painter, haul the boat up toward the ship's side, jump overboard, get into the boat, turn it around to head out, and hold it just off the ship as it swung; then each man, after completing his duty, was to jump overboard and get into the boat.

The torpedoes were to be fired at the moment



MORRO CASTLE, SANTIAGO.
The cave in the center was the rendezvous for the crew in case of escape after the sinking.

THE SCHEME AND THE PREPARATIONS

when all was secure and the ship had reached her position athwart the channel. They were to be fired from the bridge. After firing them, I was to jump overboard and join the boat, which would then be ready to pull away, all the crew having had time to reach it.

The boat was to be fitted with life-preservers under the bulwarks and thwarts to prevent sinking if it should be riddled. It was to carry seven rifles, and seven belts with one hundred and fifty cartridges in each.

The uniform was to consist of woolen underwear and two pairs of socks; each man was to wear a life-preserver and a revolver-belt with a revolver and a box of cartridges, the cartridges being immersed in tallow.

If I should not appear after the explosion, the boat was to pull away in charge of the senior petty officer present. If the boat were interfered with, it should defend itself while endeavoring to escape. If it were destroyed, we were to swim for a rendezvous on the bank under the Morro, just inside the cove, from which an effort would be made, by creeping along the bank and swimming at the steep parts, to make our way around and well to the eastward of the entrance before putting to sea to try to reach the squadron. In all cases the party would endeavor to keep together and act as a unit.

The question of volunteers being referred to, the

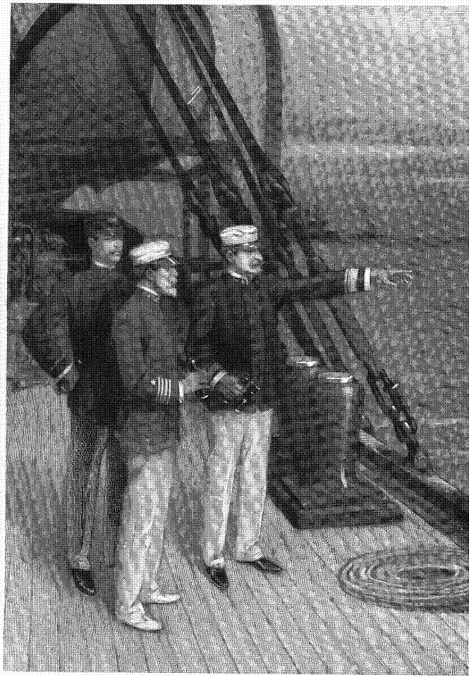
THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

admiral expressed the belief that there would be no difficulty in getting the men wanted.

By Tuesday afternoon all the preparations that could be made beforehand were well under way. The three vessels were speeding onward along the north shore of Cuba. It is a fine coast, with mountains rising straight from the sea. No wind was stirring, and the clouds hung motionless on the mountain-sides. The sky was preparing a weird sunset, remarkable even for the tropics, and the water reflected the weirdness.

The spirit of mystery over land and sea and air and sky extended to the sounds. Even the regular bugle-call to quarters and evening prayers appeared different. All nature seemed to be preparing tragedy. The enemy was near. The time for action in our sacred cause was close at hand. I lingered on deck. The moon rose bright and clear, approaching its full. On the ships sped. Cape Maysi light appeared in the distance and drew aft till it lay abeam. We changed our course to the southward, and standing down the Windward Passage, passed close to the land, and caught whiffs of the tropical vegetation. The moon was near its meridian as the vessels rounded the southeastern end of Cuba. To-morrow we should see the sun rise on Santiago.

The next day (June 1), as we went on deck, very early, we made out the Flying Squadron in the distance. As the *New York* stood down toward



ADMIRAL SAMPSON, COMMODORE SCHLEY, AND MR. HOBSON INSPECTING
THE SANTIAGO ENTRANCE FROM THE DECK OF THE "NEW YORK."

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the *Brooklyn*, there, off the starboard bow, stood the Morro, frowning down on the narrow entrance; back in the distance rose the mountains beyond the city. From aloft we could see the military tops of the *Vizcaya* and the *Cristobal Colón*, behind the cliffs of Smith Cay and Punta Gorda Neck. As the *New York* passed the bearing in line with the inner channel, a shot came out at long range. It fell short, of course, but it spoke challenge and defiance.

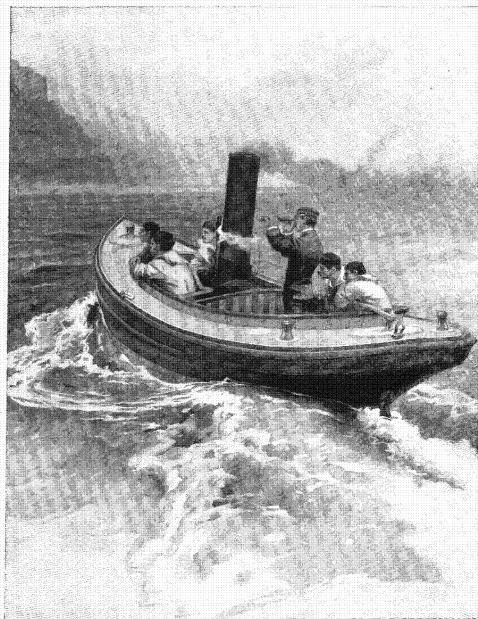
We passed the *Merrimac*, lying to the eastward, locked with the *Massachusetts* coaling alongside, and stopped near the *Brooklyn*. Commodore Schley and his flag-lieutenant, J. H. Sears, came off, and were met by Admiral Sampson and his chief of staff, Captain Chadwick, and Flag-Lieutenant Staunton, and all went below to the admiral's cabin. Soon the admiral and the commodore came on deck, and the admiral called me aft. The commodore pointed out the location of batteries as he had discovered them in the bombardment of the previous day. The sea batteries to the eastward and westward of the entrance could be made out, though dimly, but the batteries described by the commodore as lying on the slope of Socapa, the west bank of the channel, could not be located. The galleries and gun-ports of Morro could be seen, but Estrella Point and the heights of Churruca and Punta Gorda necks were obscured. I asked for a steam-launch to go in closer to reconnoiter, but my request was

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

declined. After the commodore left, the *New York* stood farther to the westward to get on the bearing, Estrella Point, north, 34° E., the course for entering. The admiral, the chief of staff, the navigator, and I then went up on the forward bridge. There was a division of opinion as to what was really Estrella Point. It was then decided to let me take the steam-launch and go in to reconnoiter, and the launch was hoisted out and the fires were lighted. The quartermaster having reported the masts and funnel of a small craft behind a neck of land to the westward, the *New York* dropped the launch and stood down to investigate the craft, which proved to be one of our auxiliaries.

When steam was up on the launch we headed in, though we were delayed by the feed-pump getting out of order. We soon were able to make out distinctly the batteries to the eastward of Morro, and those to the westward of the entrance. They were not completed, and work seemed to be going on. All question about Estrella Point disappeared, and I found two good ranges on the mountains behind to help in running in, and mentally photographed the view, noting specially the high points that would aid in recognizing the entrance at night. We avoided some objects awash that looked as though they might be range-buoys, but stood for the most part straight up the course for entering.

This course leads nearer the western shore, and



MR. HOBSON RECONNOITERING THE HARBOR ENTRANCE.

THE SCHEME AND THE PREPARATIONS

one of the crew reported seeing men in the bushes, and then a rifle-bullet passed overhead. The launch was slowed down, and directions were given to have a full head of steam, with plenty of water in the boiler, in order to be independent of the laboring feed-pump, and the cockswain was ordered to stand by to go about.

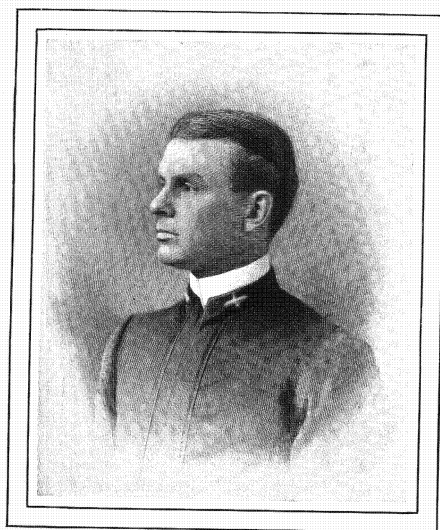
One of the crew now reported a signal flying from the *New York*, which had come back; it was the general recall. I had desired to find out something about the batteries on the slopes of Socapa, and to get some sure mark on the western side as a guide in entering at night. It soon became evident, however, that the batteries on the slopes could not be seen without actually entering, while the bushes came down to the water's edge on the west, and no mark for guidance could be found. Only the Morro side would be distinct, and the course to pass would have to be regulated by estimating the distance from the Morro. Fortunately, on this side the water was deep, and would permit of passage close aboard. The launch turned and stood out slowly, and when well away went full speed for the *New York*. It was now nearly noon. The *Merrimac* had drifted farther to the eastward. Signal had been sent to all the vessels calling for an electric machine for firing torpedoes, and the torpedoes were well in hand; but half the day was gone, and no preparations had been made on the *Merrimac*.

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

The *New York* stood back at speed, and shortly after noon stopped near by. Boatswain Mullen and I went off in a pulling-boat, and crossed over the *Massachusetts* to the *Merrimac*, where coaling was going on at all the hatches. The officers of the *Merrimac* were at luncheon, the captain and other officers forming a single mess. Everybody was completely surprised when I announced the purpose of the admiral to have the *Merrimac* sunk in the channel that night, and I was pelted with questions.

Coaling was to continue; the *Merrimac's* crew were already more or less fatigued, and as they would have their hands full in getting their effects away, could give but little, if any, assistance. I made a rapid inspection: the bow-anchor weighed fourteen thousand pounds; the hold contained about twenty-three hundred tons of coal, which lay heaped up against some of the bulkheads where the torpedoes would be placed. A signal was sent to the *New York* to send over one watch, or half her deck force, and forty coal-heavers, the deck force to be employed in preparing the anchors, chains, belt- and hogging-lines, the coal-heavers to shovel the coal away from the sides at the points of location of the torpedoes, to prevent interference with their action in blowing in the sides as well as the clogging of the ruptures.

While waiting for the men from the *New York*,



ASSISTANT-ENGINEER ROBERT K. CRANK.

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the boatswain and I went below and located the bulkheads, taking tape-measure distances to fix their positions accurately on the outside. Assistant Engineer R. K. Crank went with me through the boiler- and engine-rooms, and agreed to the use of part of his own force to do the work of preparing the sea connections for flooding and of opening up the cargo-ports and all openings throughout. When all the work was done, we were to go through for final inspection.

The preparation of anchors and chains, belt- and hogging-lines, was explained in full to the boatswain. The starboard chain was to be roused up and ranged along the forecastle; the starboard anchor to be got over the bow; the port anchor to be unshackled and transported aft to the starboard quarter, the port chain being similarly transported; the bow-anchor to have sixty fathoms clear, and the stern-anchor about forty fathoms, the last fifteen fathoms to have the stops for breaking.

We went into the forehold to look for gear, and found plenty in the *Merrimac's* supply. We selected eight-inch new Manila for the long lengths of elastic hawser, and five-inch new Manila for the stops; a large coil of new four-and-a-half-inch Manila would answer admirably for the belt-line, and eighteen-thread stuff for the hogging-lines. As we expected the stripping of the ship to begin soon, we set this gear aside to prevent its falling into the

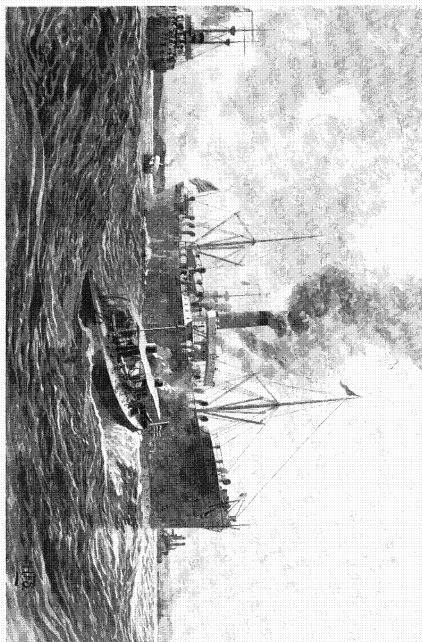
THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

hands of some boatswain's mate or other provident pillager.

When I returned to the *New York* to see about the personnel of the crew and the status of the torpedoes, the starboard watch from the *New York* had come over under Naval Cadet Boone, and forty coal-heavers were on their way from the *Brooklyn*. Captain J. M. Miller of the *Merrimac* had given directions to his officers and crew to prepare to leave the ship, and was himself leaving to see the admiral.

In reply to the signal for an electric machine, a negative answer had come from all ships. There was not one in the squadron. It seemed a coincidence that the vessels that were known to have them were all north of Cuba. Batteries of cells would have to be depended on. The *New York* had only a few spare firing-cells. The fleet was called upon. I requested Lieutenant Roller to take the matter in hand, get together the cells, allowing three or four times the number usually required for the eight-inch primers, arrange the cells for maximum efficiency, test all the cable for insulation, and actually fire trial primers under the conditions of use.

While I was on the *Merrimac*, Assistant Engineer Crank had expressed a wish to go in with the ship, and had recommended a machinist, Phillips, and a water-tender, Kelly, who had shown themselves competent and reliable, and who wished to go.



THE "MERRIMAC" AS A COLLIER AMONG THE FLEET.

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Captain Miller, who expected to go in, had spoken in high terms of his quartermaster and cockswain, young Deignan. There was advantage in having men for the wheel, the engines, and the boilers from the *Merrimac's* crew, on account of their familiarity with the vessel; so I called the three men up, looked at them well, explained the nature of the mission, and asked if they wished to go. All replied affirmatively, so I decided to take them.

The call for volunteers had been made by signal, and names were pouring in by the hundred. It may be said broadly that the bulk of the fleet was anxious to go. The admiral had thought that perhaps it might be well to have a junior officer, and had asked for volunteers from the junior officers of the *New York*. The junior officers' mess responded en masse. Powell, one of my pupils at the Naval Academy, was on deck when I came on board, and begged me to take him. Eggert, another of my pupils, saw me, and pleaded to go. Men of the *New York's* crew pressed upon me and used all kinds of arguments to persuade me to take them. It was as though a great favor were being asked and every means were taken to have it granted.

Captain Miller had now returned to the *Merrimac*. When I was about to leave, the admiral sent for me and said that Captain Miller claimed it as his right as commanding officer of the vessel to go in with the *Merrimac*, and that he did not see how his

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

claim could be disregarded. My answer was in effect that I should be happy to serve in any capacity, but that it must be evident to all that Captain Miller could not be anything but a passenger, even if nominally in command, being entirely unfamiliar with the details of the plans, while it was, of course, too late in the day to become properly acquainted with them; that I had carefully reduced the crew to a minimum, and had made the duties the very simplest, and felt it would be unjustifiable, even wrong, to allow a single man in excess of the requirements, and for this reason had refused the junior officers and all others; that, besides other considerations, we should all certainly be overboard; that my men should be young, athletic, and used to exposure; that probably no one of the age of a commander would be equal to the physical strain; that if there should be a chance to escape we should certainly not abandon the captain, and his presence would probably entail the loss of all; that when the situation was clear to the captain he surely would not insist on going, however great his desire, as he could not really consider that it was right or was his duty to go. The admiral concluded that he would not allow the captain to go.

It was understood with the executive officer of the *New York*, who was in charge of the list of volunteers, that word would be sent as to the men to be selected.

THE SCHEME AND THE PREPARATIONS

I then left the *New York*, with the understanding that notice would be sent when all was ready on the *Merrimac*, whereupon the admiral would go on board to inspect.

Matters on the *New York* detained me, and the afternoon had worn well along when I reached the *Merrimac*. The conditions on board can hardly be conceived. Orders had been given to strip the ship, and only a few hours remained in which to do it. Squads from various vessels were everywhere removing articles. The crew of the *Merrimac* were looking to their own effects. The gangways were piled with boxes, cans, and debris of all kinds, and a barrel of beer had got adrift. To my horror, the port bower-chain had not been unshackled; the boatswain and his gang were at work on it, and still it resisted; the starboard anchor and chain were as yet untouched. The coal-heavers, misunderstanding the instructions given, had been shoveling coal from port to starboard. Men in the stripping squads were everywhere in the way. It was impossible to tell who belonged to the working squads and who did not. Utter confusion existed, and under the circumstances would admit of but slight remedy. Even the gear laid aside for belt- and hogging-lines, stops, and hawsers, had been pilaged. It was evidently to be a desperate fight against time.

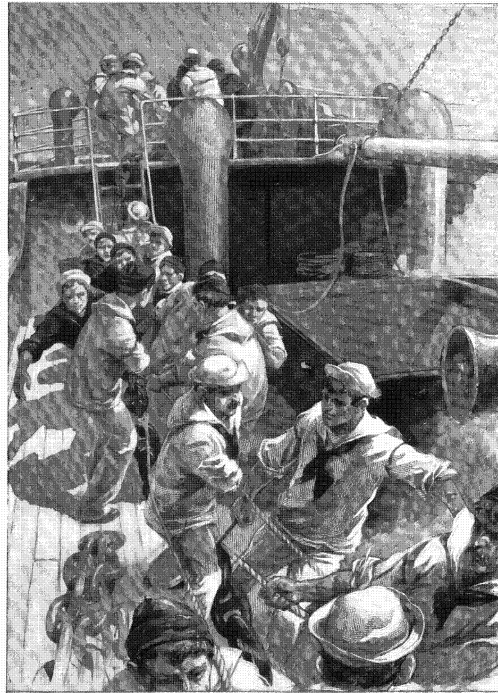
The idea of getting the fourteen-thousand-pound

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

anchor aft had to be abandoned, but there was a heavy stream-anchor already aft and another forward. We slung the one forward from the cargo-boom to the deck of the *Massachusetts*, which dropped aft; then we took it up with a cargo-boom aft, and proceeded to lash the two stream-anchors together, crown to ring, or tandem-fashion, which would give the two combined as great holding-power as the heavier bower-anchor.

When we started rousing up the starboard chain, the anchor-windlass worked badly. Soon the port anchor-chain was unshackled, and it was apparent that the heaviest work would come in getting the chain aft; for the fifteen-fathom lengths could not be unshackled, as the shackle-pins could not be driven out; so the heavy chain, the very largest size manufactured, would have to be transported aft in one piece the whole length of the ship.

To save time, we started rousing this chain up without stopping the rousing up of the starboard chain. The windlass utterly rebelled. About thirty fathoms of the latter chain were already up, and it started back by the run into the locker. It was fairly heartrending to see the chain go charging back, undoing the results of such hard work. More than half had run back before it could be checked. The port chain would have to wait till the starboard chain was completely up. The sun was setting be-



HAULING THE ANCHOR-CHAIN TO THE STERN.

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fore the heavier work could be begun, when finally the chain started up, and after getting aft as far as the deck-house, would not budge farther. I appealed to all the men from all the gangs. They took hold, some with their hands, some with the chain-hooks, some with ropes' ends. The chain started up, but soon stopped again. No effort could make it move a second time. Darkness was setting in. The search for lanterns showed that the strippers had preceded us in the lamp-room; only two or three lanterns could be found, and those were in bad condition. The men were nearly exhausted, having been working without relief and without supper. We turned steam on the after-winch, determined to make them haul the chain aft, but no tackles could be found; all had been taken off. We used part of the coil for the belt-line, and after breaking it several times finally started the chain, and this measure gave promise of getting the required amount aft in course of time.

Hogging-lines had been started by means of a weight put over the bow in a span of the line, carrying it below the keel, a man on each side walking aft outside till the desired point was reached. As bad fortune would have it, the lines already put over became entangled, and nearly all had to be hauled in, and the work done over. Moreover, the strippers having pillaged the gear laid aside, as mentioned above, the stuff for hogging-

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

lines was found to be missing. In fact, the hawsers were just being started over the side, and the coil for the belt-line was on deck, when we caught and saved them. So material for the hogging-lines had to be improvised by unreeving tackles from the cargo-booms and by searching among the debris. The *Massachusetts*, after transporting the stream-anchor aft, had shoved off, and with her departure the stripping abated. Now only a squad from the *Texas* and the force from the *Brooklyn* remained, besides the men from the *New York*. The *New York* hailed, and said she would send off the port watch to relieve the starboard watch. We had been drifting steadily to the eastward; the *Texas* and the *Brooklyn* were not in sight. The coal-heavers could do no more work in the darkness below, so the two squads were sent to the *New York* with the *New York's* starboard watch when the port watch came off. The steam-launch had brought off the gunner, with the torpedoes, batteries, and wire, and some dynamo-men were sent for to help in running the wires. It was dark, for the moon was obscured, and we had little lantern-light; but the men just arrived were fresh, and the interfering groups were gone, so we could work with more organization.

Cadet Boone took a squad and started the belt-line, and when the belt-line was around at the height of the rail, where the torpedoes were to be

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attached, he continued with the same men to get the hogging-lines in place.

Assistant Engineer Crank had been at work with his men below, and now reported the cargo-ports opened and the sea connections prepared, all ready for inspection. I went below with him and found things in excellent shape; the nuts were off the bonnet of the main injection, a strut held the bonnet in place, and it required only a blow to knock the strut out and release the bonnet, which was under a head of about fifteen feet of water-pressure. The smaller connections and also the condenser discharge, which went overboard below the water-line, would be readily cut in two by the blow of an ax. All openings, hatches, manhole covers, etc., were opened. At Mr. Crank's suggestion we had already admitted about seven hundred tons of water to the double bottom. Lieutenant Gilmer of the *Merrimac*, who had been lending a hand during the day, took charge of the stern-anchors. As soon as these should be lashed together and slung over the side, and the chain bent on and ranged clear, the boatswain was to take most of the men to get the bower-anchor over and put on the stops and hawsers. The gunner and his own men and the dynamo-men were leading the wires to the positions on the rail, ready to connect with the short lengths coming out of the torpedoes. Last of all, the torpedoes were to be attached and secured to belt-

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

line and hogging-lines at the height of the rail, where it was intended they should remain for inspection by the admiral.

I had hoped to report the vessel ready by midnight (June 1-2), but this hope had been abandoned. Toward ten or eleven o'clock the different tasks were advancing concurrently, and there seemed to be a fighting chance of being ready before moon-set, when the gunner reported an insufficient quantity of wire; a mistake had been made in the quantity supposed to be at hand. The *New York* had remained near us, and I hailed for her steam-launch and went on board, but no wire was to be found. The vessels of the squadron were out of sight, but a Norwegian steamer, fitted out for cable service, lay in the distance, and I ran down to her in the launch. She did not have what we wanted, but had any quantity of an insulated wire that would answer. We took a coil, and came back by the *New York* for items of which a memorandum had been left, such as life-preservers, boat equipment, signal-cord, new axes for cutting the anchor-lashings, seizing-stuff for securing the torpedoes, an ensign, etc.

With regard to the ensign, I had asked Captain Miller about the flag of the *Merrimac*. He said that he had already considered the matter, but had found that the strippers had taken off the ensign and the contents of the signal-chest, and even the signal-halyards. In fact, the men had been so

THE SCHEME AND THE PREPARATIONS

keen for relics and souvenirs that nothing seemed to have escaped. He said that he had, however, an enormous flag, blue field, or background, with "Maine" across it in large letters, which he proposed to have bent on. But I was particularly anxious for a large national flag, and put it down on the list of items for the executive officer to get us on the *New York*. I was a little afraid they would not let us have the flag, so I asked the executive officer not to say anything about it to Captain Chadwick until we were gone, and told him that I should not hoist it while running in or while doing so could in any way affect the success of the effort, but that I did wish very much to hoist it after firing the torpedoes, as the vessel sank. The executive officer was not convinced, and his instinct of the risk involved was true; for though the captain let me have the flag without asking any questions, and it was bent on the halyards at the bridge ready for hoisting, it was never hoisted, for after the work was done, and the *Merrimac* was sinking, and a strong impulse set in to have the flag flying, it was clear, lying at the muzzles of the enemy's guns, that any movement to hoist it would betray our position and cost the lives of us all. My responsibility for the group forbade me to make the attempt.

Before leaving the *New York* the captain said that we had drifted twelve or fifteen miles to the eastward. It was then nearly twelve o'clock, and it

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

was necessary to start to the westward without delay. The admiral had ordered the *Mayflower* and one of the other vessels to place themselves on a range with the course into the harbor, to serve for a starting-point.

The admiral was to come off to inspect with the boats that came to take off the men to the *New York*. Montague, the only member of the volunteer crew not already on board, came off with me.

While on the *Merrimac*, Mullen, the boatswain, had asked to go. As the letting go of the bow-anchor would be especially perilous, with the running out of the chain and the breaking of stops and hawsers, and no one would appreciate the danger better than the boatswain, he was accepted.

About the same time, Charette came to me and said that he had put down his name with the volunteers before leaving the *New York*, and he hoped I would take him, for he had served with me when I was a midshipman on the *Chicago*. I remembered his service well, and good service it was. He had been in the dynamo-room, and was afterward gunner's mate, and was the very man to help with the torpedoes and be at hand for anything that might arise. This left only one more man to choose—the man to cut the lashing of the stern-anchor. There would be advantage in having a man who could best handle the men in case Mullen and I did not appear. After consultation with the executive offi-

THE SCHEME AND THE PREPARATIONS

cer of the *New York*, Montague, the chief master-at-arms of that vessel, was selected, and the crew was complete.

It was about midnight when the launch reached the *Merrimac*. After discharging, it was sent back to the *New York*, and preparations were made for getting under way. It had been arranged that we should have a trial spin before going in. Mr. Crank would remain in charge of the engines till the last moment, having a good head of steam and everything in shape. The run to the westward would answer for the trial, and directions were given for a full-speed run, at the highest safe and sure speed. We were under way by half-past twelve, and stood to the westward, making fifty-two revolutions, approaching nine knots. The *New York* stood on also, but was soon left behind. She had the steam-launch in tow, and apparently could not tow it faster without losing it.

The last few hours had seen large progress all along the line. The stern-anchor was over the side, and the chain was being bent on and ranged clear. It was so situated that in coming under strain it would tear the bulwarks out, tear up the hatch-coaming, and bring up against the mainmast. With the length of chain extending to the chain-lockers at the bow, large elasticity would be obtained. The bower-anchor was over the bow, slung and lashed; breaking-stops were being put on,

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

eight stops between forty and sixty fathoms; and the hawser was in place. It was not practicable to take the hawser over the deck-house, as it was only about seventy-five feet long; so another of the same length was added, both to be broken at sixty fathoms, before the rigidity of the anchor-fastenings should "bring up"; one of the hawsers carried the stops, which were far enough apart to allow the hawser to spring back and recover its elasticity after each strain. The belt-line was around and at the height of the rail; the hogging-lines were in place. The gunner having reported that at the final test on the *New York* the battery could fire only six primers, the six most important positions were selected, and the torpedoes were secured in place while the wiring went on.

A mist had come over the moon. The coast-line was obscure. A heavy black cloud appeared in the southeast, and the horizon was thickening to the south and southwest, and began to threaten the last hours of the moon. Soon the *New York* was out of sight; apparently she was making only five or six knots. Captain Miller was sitting on the bridge; Deignan was at the wheel; the ship replied well to the helm, and the gallant captain told about her steering and manœuvring qualities and other virtues, still expecting to go in with his ship. He had let me take complete charge, and I had not thought it necessary to tell him of the admiral's final decision.

THE SCHEME AND THE PREPARATIONS

The light became so dim that the headlands could scarcely be made out with the night-glasses. About two o'clock a craft was sighted ahead, then another, on a southwesterly line of bearing with the first. We concluded that they must be the range-vessels; so the helm was put up, and we stood out, to turn upon their line of bearing from seaward, keeping on the range, in readiness for the start after the *New York* should arrive. One of the craft began to show up an intermittent light; was it a private signal? I had not been notified of any signal to be expected from a range-vessel, and gave no reply, but kept pointed in toward the craft.

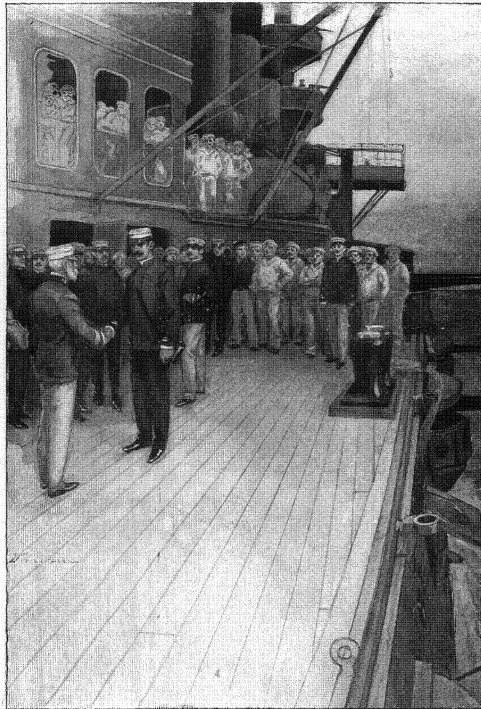
It seemed as though the *New York* had lost us. It must have been nearly three o'clock before her boats came alongside and Admiral Sampson came on board. It had been decided, with the short time remaining, not to wait for his inspection of the torpedoes, and the hogging-lines had been hauled down; the last ones aft were being hauled down when he came on board and inspected. He said he thought we were well out, probably five or six miles, so I asked that the torpedo-boat should go and find out what the unknown craft were. When it returned it reported that they were vessels belonging to the press. The one that had showed the light was perhaps simply a little timid, with an idea of being run down.

The admiral carefully inspected the anchor and

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

chain aft and on the forecastle. Everything was in readiness for letting go—blocks under the lashings, with axes at hand. The wiring was complete, and responded to the test, the firing-ends being on the starboard side of the bridge, ready to make contact. Montague and Charette had led off the signal-cords, and, with the boatswain, had got the life-boat out and put in the arms and equipment. The boatswain considered that the boat in question would tow better alongside than astern, a long line being got out from forward, another from abreast the boat. When the after hogging-lines had been hauled home, the *New York's* men were ordered into the boats. Before leaving, Cadet Boone asked earnestly to be allowed to remain, but he had to be refused like the others. The admiral went on the bridge to wait till the men were off, and was the last to leave. On coming on board, the admiral had gone up on the bridge, and as he spoke to Captain Miller, I heard an exclamation of disappointment from the latter. Though bitterly chagrined, the generous captain came up to say a kind word and wish us success. Assistant Engineer Crank, who was still in the engine-room, was to remain on board till the last stretch, when he was to be taken off by the torpedo-boat that would accompany us to that point.

The moon had now gone behind a bank rising up from the horizon; it must have been beyond its



THE GOOD-BY TO ADMIRAL SAMPSON.

THE SCHEME AND THE PREPARATIONS

setting-time before the admiral left. When I had referred to the lack of light and the obscurity of the coast-line, the admiral gave reassurance as to the conditions when we should be closer, based on the principle that the intensity of light varies inversely as the square of the distance. But the absolute necessity of adequate light had been growing on me.

The admiral said good-by with a simple word of kindness. With us who knew him, such a word from Admiral Sampson would outweigh a volume.

When the launch shoved off with the admiral, its propeller fouled one of our lines, and it was probably half an hour in clearing. It must, indeed, have been after four o'clock when we finally started. Dawn had not tinged the east, but it was certainly near at hand. We started up slowly, then at full speed. The life-boat charged out from the side, ready to capsize. We slowed down and shortened the breast-line. As we started ahead again, it charged back and forth as before. It was evident that the boat could not be towed at full speed. Time was pressing, and it had been questionable from the first if there would be a chance to use the boat. We must approach at full speed for success. So I decided not to slow down again. The boat plunged back and forth, then with a wide sheer capsized and broke adrift, floating away bottom up.

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

We were now clear. The men, stripped to underclothes, put on revolvers and belts and life-preservers, took their stations, and tied the signal-cords to their wrists. Soon the vessels of the squadron showed up, rather to the eastward; then we caught the outline of the Morro itself. There was only a short distance to stand to the westward to make the course for entering, north, 34° E. A rose tinge appeared in the east; day was breaking. We should find ample light to enter by.

Suddenly a hail came from close aboard on the port side; the torpedo-boat, the *Porter*, came tearing up, and Lieutenant Fremont, her commander, announced that the admiral directed the *Merrimac* to return. It would not do to disobey; but would not the admiral reconsider? I knew that light was necessary in any case, and felt that we could make the entrance. My reply was a request to the lieutenant to return to the flagship and ask the admiral to let us go on, as I felt sure that we could get in. The *Merrimac* did not slacken. It was arranged that, in case the admiral should consent, the torpedo-boat should have four red lights turned on the *New York's* signal-hoist. I told Charette to keep a lookout for the red lights, and we stood on. The torpedo-boat reached the flagship and started back at full speed. But no red lights appeared. The admiral was inexorable. We should have to wait another day.

PART II

THE RUN IN

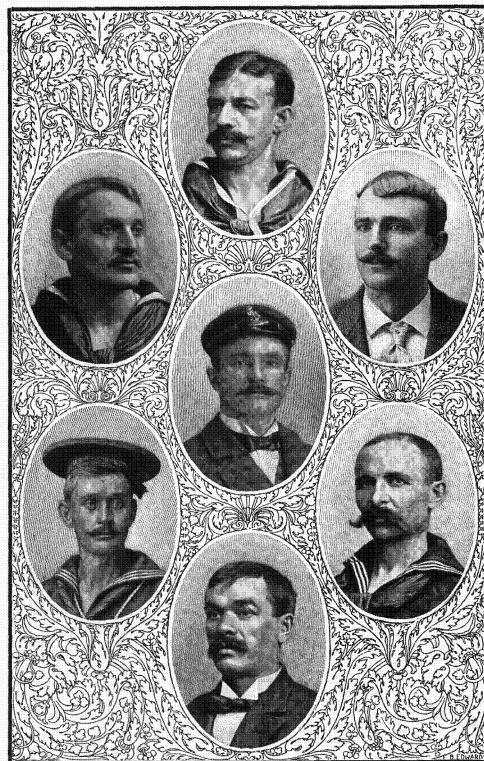
Disappointment at the recall—A day of waiting—The plan of going in at sunset—Two elements of weakness—Mullen's pluck—Kindness of officers—Good-by to the flagship—The look of things—Rehearsing the work—Clausen not a stowaway—Precautions for rescue—The last meal on the *Merrimac* and final preparations—Making for the entrance—The firing begins—Loss of the steering-gear—Trouble with the torpedoes—A crisis off Estrella Point—Kelly's narrow escape—Beginning to sink—Conversation on deck—A focus of fire—The final plunge—In the vortex—Clinging to the catamaran—Admiral Cervera to the rescue.

WHEN the torpedo-boat *Porter* overtook the *Merrimac* and delivered the admiral's imperative order to return, one could see a cloud of gloom and disappointment pass over the men. No one spoke a word. Every man lingered near his post for some time, not wishing to make the effort necessary to get into a position of comfort. I knew how the men felt. A fearful reaction had set in. I remember catching hold of a stanchion on the bridge and leaning my head back against it as the ship swung around. Mullen soon came aft, looking like

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

a specter, haggard beyond description. Charette was sent down to tell the engine force that the run was off. Mr. Crank appeared at the hatch, stripped to a breech-cloth; he was expecting to go in with the ship, and the reaction had seized him also. The situation must have appealed to the men on the torpedo-boat, for before she left us Lieutenant Fremont hailed with some kind words of sympathy. I told Mullen to have all the men lie down, and suggested that he do the same. He objected for his own part, and insisted that he be allowed to relieve me, and that I lie down myself. It was necessary to give him a positive order. The reaction took a different form with the boy Deignan. Nature's fatigue set in. Seeing a tired look come over him, I took the wheel and ordered him to sit down, and soon he fell asleep as he sat. I made him lie down on the bridge, and he went off into a deep, motionless sleep, utterly unaffected by the hailing and the other noises that set in later.

We stood over to the *New York*, steered up parallel within hail, and stopped. The executive officer hailed, and said a relief crew would soon be over, but asked if we could take care of the vessel till the relief crew could get breakfast. We replied that we would take care of her as long as might be desired. The headway having carried us forward some distance, we put the helm astarboard to steer across and circle back, when suddenly the *New*



Randolph Cluauem.
Osborn Warren Deignan.

George Charvito.
Paul Montague.
Francis Kelly.

J. E. Murphy.
George F. Phillips.

THE MEMBERS OF MR. ROBSON'S CREW.

THE RUN IN

York started up, her propeller-race began to seethe, and she shot by us at full speed. We looked ahead, and on the horizon to the southwest discovered a craft standing toward the harbor. Soon the smoke began to pour out of the *New York's* funnels. The craft stopped, turned about, and took to her heels, and a chase was on. The quarry was fleet and had ten or twelve miles' start. She drew hull down and then disappeared. The *New York* stood straight on and gradually disappeared, and for a long time the two columns of smoke told of hot pursuit. The *Porter* stood out at full speed to join in, and we saw her cut over the horizon. There would be hours of chase and hours for return.

A scorching sun rose high in a cloudless sky; not a breath of air stirred; a blinding glare came out of a glassy sea, and a day of waiting lay before us. Mullen soon came up again to say that the men could not sleep, and to insist on relieving me. I saw that the poor fellow was long past the stage for sleep, but it again required a positive order to make him go down. My instructions were that all the men should lie still in the shade, close their eyes, and think of nothing, whether they could sleep or not. Before long Charette, indefatigable and always thoughtful, came up with a piece of canvas, a boat cover, and rigged it as an awning over part of the bridge. It was actually exhilarating to watch him do this in his bright, cheery way. When the awn-

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

ing was snug he went below, soon reappearing with a bucket of water, apologizing because he had not been able to find a glass, and denouncing the strippers for the thorough work they had done in the pantry. This was not the first time he had had a fling at them, for coffee had been in fearful demand all night, and he had searched high and low again and again without finding a grain. The only articles that escaped were some cold meat and bread left by the officers from luncheon. We had finished these for supper, and Charette took it very much to heart that he could find nothing for us during the night.

Mr. Crank reported that on one of the boilers a gage-glass had given trouble, so he, Phillips, and Kelly stayed below, working on the repairs in the hot fire-room.

We remained thus till late in the afternoon. The fleet lay off several miles to the eastward and northward. About ten or eleven o'clock the *Marblehead* and the *Harvard* stood over, and a boat came off from the *Marblehead* to get the effects of Captain Miller to put them on the *Harvard*. Evidently he was to go North. His effects had been put on the *Massachusetts* before she left us the day before. The boat officer, Ensign Gherardi, must have seen some evidence of destitution, for he inquired if we had had breakfast, and insisted on going over to the *Marblehead* to get us something. We told him that what we wanted was coffee, black and scalding.

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He brought off a steaming bucketful, with plenty of hardtack--a superb combination. It is inconceivable how revivifying it was. We had been calling aloud for hot coffee, even those of us who were not accustomed to its use.

The hours passed without further incident. A press-boat passed by and asked to come aboard. The *Marblehead* asked for the camels, or floats, that the *Merrimac* had on board for use in coaling alongside at sea. We told her she could have them if she would send her own men to get them out. Before young Gherardi left, he suggested that a junior officer might be of service and asked to be allowed to go in with us, necessitating again the duty of refusal.

Along toward one or two o'clock the *Porter* stood back. Evidently the chase had been brought to a finish, or the *New York* had demonstrated her ability to attend to the case unaided. We signaled the torpedo-boat by wigwag to come within hail. The absolute necessity for good conditions of light and the lesser consequence of any difference in the chance of escape had become fully impressed upon me, and taking account of the condition of the men, it appeared that it would be best to go in about sunset. When the *Porter* arrived within hail I asked her to go out to the *New York*, inform the admiral of this conclusion, and request permission to execute it. She said the *New York* would be

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

along in an hour or two, and little if any time could be saved by her going back; so she stood on down toward the fleet, after being requested to apply to the vessels for additional electric firing-batteries, so we could put over the four torpedoes left off the belt. The *Marblehead* had already been applied to, but had no cells to spare. We had been drifting farther out, and the *Brooklyn* signaled to come closer. We were only waiting for the *Marblehead's* men to get the floats clear, and these were giving trouble. The *New York* appeared above the horizon and stood down toward the fleet. Finally we were clear. The *Marblehead*, upon application, had sent over a machinist and a fireman, Phillips and Kelly being still engaged in the repair-work. We stood down through the fleet and rounded to, ranging parallel to the *New York*. When within hail, I requested permission from the admiral to go in at sunset. The answer from Flag-Lieutenant Staunton was: "The admiral's reply to your request is a direction for you to come on board." The *New York* sent off a boat, and I went on board, leaving Mullen in charge.

The admiral and his chief of staff, Captain Chadwick, listened to the plan for going in at sunset, and seemed to regard it, as well as the idea of going in after daybreak, as involving too much risk and exposure, cutting off all chance of escape. The admiral having refused my request, I suggested a

THE RUN IN

modification that might reduce the enemy's fire, by having the coöperation of the fleet. The plan was that the fleet, including the *Merrimac*, should form in column and circle by, passing down as far as the bearing forming the course for entering, each time crossing this bearing a little nearer the entrance, fire not to be opened unless first begun by the enemy. On the second or third turn, upon arriving on the course, the *Merrimac* should break from the circle and dash forward for the entrance; the whole fleet should open on the batteries, which would doubtless answer upon the fleet; and thus before the enemy could recover from the first shock and from the idea that the manœuver meant bombardment, the *Merrimac* could enter and do her work. After consideration the admiral decided against this plan also, holding that the manœuver would cause the enemy to man all their guns and be in full preparation, and that they could divert their fire from the fleet to the *Merrimac*. Both he and Captain Chadwick still regarded it wisest to make the effort before daybreak. I represented again that a certain amount of light was absolutely necessary for success, that the men were under heavy tension, and that we ought not again to be recalled. It was finally decided that we should wait till the last hours of the moon; but it was agreed and understood that if I found the moonlight too dim I should be allowed to go in after daybreak, without fear of recall.

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

Since the last conference with the admiral, my instinct had set more and more strongly toward the two elements of weakness, the danger of the steering-gear being shot away before the time for putting the helm over, and the fragility of the electric batteries. The thought of the steering-gear being shot away had been haunting me all day. Investigation showed that it was impossible to arrange for steering in any other way, and I called the admiral's attention to this peril as the only one that could prevent the success of the manœuver; for it was absolutely necessary that the vessel should be pointed fair so as to enter the channel without the use of helm, and for this good light was essential. The admiral said that he had already thought over the matter and fully appreciated the situation, but that the chances were against the steering-gear being shot away so soon. In view of the fragility of the firing-cells, the gunner was sent over with additional cells, with directions to put on the four torpedoes left off the belt the night before. My conviction of the inherent weakness of this part of the plan was so strong that, as a last request, I asked the admiral a second time to allow me to take the war-heads, promising that I would not use them unless the belt-torpedoes proved inadequate and they were necessary to success. The admiral again refused, using the same words as before: "They would blow everything to the devil."

THE RUN IN

Besides the gunner and his gang a deck force was sent over to prepare another life-boat. This time I decided not to attempt to tow it, but to carry it slung from a cargo-boom over the starboard quarter below the rail. The idea was that, instead of jumping overboard, the men, after finishing their duties, would "lay aft" and rendezvous abreast the life-boat, waiting until directed to get in. All being ready, the suspending line would be cut and the boat would drop adrift. The arms and equipment and the plan for handling the boat would be the same as decided on in the first instance. Attention was called to an old catamaran at hand, and it was slung over the side in a similar way near the life-boat.

As soon as it was settled that the entrance was not to be made at sunset, a relief crew was sent over, and the men from the *Merrimac* were sent on board the *New York* to get a little rest and a hearty meal. However, they were unable to sleep, and cared for little refreshment except coffee. They were beyond the stage of appetite or sleep. After they arrived, Captain Chadwick called me up to say that he had seen Mullen, and there was no question about his being utterly exhausted. I had feared as much, for he had been working all night and the previous day, missing four successive meals. It is difficult for one not present to conceive the fearful conditions of strain, mental and physical, that Mullen was under when we were fighting against time in

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

the preparation of anchors and chains. With the prolongation of anxiety, and without ability to rest, he had almost passed the limit of human endurance. But he was game to the end, and would not give up. It required an imperative order from Captain Chadwick to keep him back.

It now became a question of selecting a man in his place. When the *Iowa* sent her long list of volunteers and learned that so few men were required, she selected one man from all the number—Murphy, cockswain. There can be no question about a man whom a ship's company singles out to be its representative. It was decided to take Murphy, and I was to determine after seeing him whether to intrust to him Mullen's perilous duty. Signal was made to the *Iowa* to send him over.

All remaining details were attended to. The executive officer of the *New York* thoughtfully directed a basket of provisions and a bucket of strong coffee to be ready. The fleet surgeon prepared two canteens of medicated water. A short while remained before the time for leaving, and I went below for a shower-bath. It was deeply touching to see the kindness and thoughtfulness shown on all sides. The caterer had directed the steward's special preparation of coffee, and a cup, black and steaming, was kept ready on the table for the moment of coming below. The orderly came down to say that Captain Chadwick would be

THE RUN IN

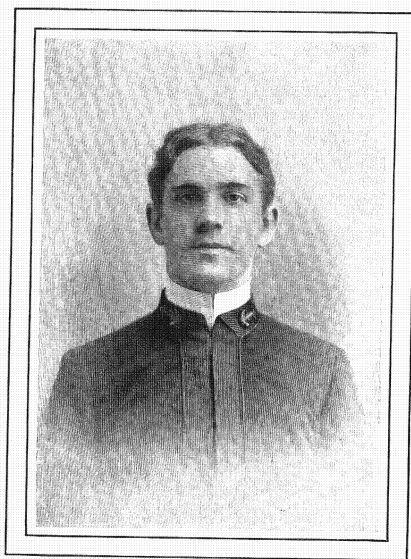
happy to have me join him in a late afternoon luncheon—most thoughtful and opportune, for I should be leaving about the dinner-hour. One officer had just received some specially fine lemons and oranges: I must try them and take some along. Another had a handsome brace of pistols: surely they would be better than the bulky service revolver. Still another had a special cordial with virtues all its own: might he not put up a bottle? Captain Miller, who had been assigned to my state-room, was foremost in cordiality and expressions of kindness. But most touching was the solicitude of Captain Chadwick. He did not wish me to talk, for it would require exertion. I must sit down, though he and the admiral were standing. I must lie down and sleep upon reaching the *Merrimac*. It was in vain I assured him that I was in excellent shape, with pulse normal, nerves steady,—if anything a tinge phlegmatic,—brain as clear as a bell—in fact, only in “second wind,” as it were, while the limit of endurance was not in sight. He would not be convinced, and even threatened that if I did not take measures for resting he should feel like advising the admiral not to let me go in next morning. In fact, before leaving he delivered strict orders that on reaching the *Merrimac* I should remain below and not appear on the bridge before one o'clock.

The crew of the *Merrimac* left the *New York* about

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

six o'clock. The admiral was at the gangway, the last to say good-by, having again a simple word of kindness, a hand-pressure, a look that spoke more than a volume of words. Cadet Palmer made a last plea to be allowed to go, saying that he was assistant navigator, was in practice in taking compass bearings, and would be useful in approaching the entrance, and the admiral and chief of staff approved. Such was his eloquent pleading, difficult to refuse, but the same reasons held as in the other cases.

As we went over to the *Merrimac* the vessels of the fleet were standing down for their night positions of blockade on the arc of a circle around the entrance, about four miles from the Morro as a center. Cadet Joseph W. Powell came to take charge with the relief crew, a pilot being with him to assist in keeping the Morro located. Upon arriving, the gunner reported that three of the torpedo connections would not respond to the test, and in consequence there were only seven for service, these being located in the position of the six of the previous night, with the additional one aft, corresponding to positions numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8 on the plan, page 14. Moreover, he had found that the cells would act with better effect if arranged in separate groups, and had so arranged them, with ten cells to each torpedo, the cells lying on the deck abreast the torpedo, each torpedo having thus its



ENSIGN JOSEPH WRIGHT POWELL.

THE RUN IN

own independent contact. In view of the additional security in not having all the cells concentrated in one spot, the arrangement was accepted, although it would require at least one additional man and would cause the firing to be less under my own control. The boatswain's mate reported that the life-boat and the catamaran had been arranged as directed, and his gang and the gunner's gang were sent back to the *New York* before we got under way, the steam-launch returning to remain with the *Merrimac* in order to take off the relief crew when the regular crew should take charge.

In the launch in which we came off a new man was sitting in the bow; some one said it was Murphy of the *Iowa*. I looked at him well and felt that there need be no hesitation about giving him Mullen's duty.

Powell went on the bridge with the pilot and took charge. The *Merrimac's* crew were directed to lie down and try to sleep until they should be called; Powell was to have us called at one. In obedience to orders to rest, I went into the bridge-house and lay down on the transom. The *New York* and the *Merrimac* stood down in company till the *New York* reached her blockading position. It was interesting to listen to the sounds of the engines, of the vessel moving through the water, and of the voices on the bridge. The two ships hailed several times, and then made a farewell hail as the

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

New York drew off to her position. The *Merrimac* stood on farther to the southward and westward till she reached a position just outside of the blockading line, with Morro bearing about northeast. Here she lay motionless for several hours, waiting for the time to start.

There was a weirdness in the situation as I looked out of the air-port from time to time. The moon, now nearly full, rose high, and reached and passed the meridian without a cloud appearing in the sky. The *Brooklyn* lay off to the northwest, and in the reflected light looked almost white; the *Texas*, to the northeast, presenting her shadowy side, looked dark and menacing. The other vessels farther in the distance seemed like phantoms. All lights were extinguished, and the moon was supreme in the stillness. The mountains far back beyond Santiago were scarcely visible; the peaks closer to the westward rose high with a distinct sky-line. The mountains continued landward the circle of the ships.

Sleep was out of the question, so I went over, to the minutest detail, the various features of the work to be done. The torpedoes, with the new arrangement, were to be fired in succession, beginning forward so as to throw her down by the bow. After letting go the anchor, Murphy was to fire torpedo No. 1 without further orders. Charette was then to fire torpedo No. 2, then torpedo No. 3. Deignan,

THE RUN IN

after putting the helm hard aport, was to "lay down" to torpedo No. 4 and be ready to fire by the time No. 3 went off. An additional man was to be selected from the relief crew to attend to torpedo No. 5. After stopping the engine, Phillips and Kelly were to open the sea connections and flood without further orders and then come on deck, and Phillips was to stand by to fire torpedo No. 6, and Kelly torpedo No. 8.

Those were hours of interesting experience before the start. There was no diversion of the senses, and this fact and the feeling of loneliness seemed to deepen the impression of the closeness of God and nature. My business affairs had been disposed of at the beginning of the war, and I had no disquieting thoughts as to the past or the future. The mind and heart accepted the reality of things with deep, keen, exquisite delight. There were singular emotions, as the thoroughness of preparation and the sureness of execution became clearer and clearer, while the details and the processes were gone over again and again. Toward midnight, when there was no longer any chance of the moon failing, these emotions amounted to exultation, so much so that I could not help giving it expression. Charette had been stirring near at hand; in fact, a little while before, when some one in the darkness had made a noise, Charette expostulated in a vehement whisper: "Can't you keep quiet there! Don't

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

you know Mr. Hobson is sleeping here!" I called out: "Charette, lad, we are going to make it tonight. There is no power under heaven can keep us out of the channel!" He seemed surprised that the outer channel was the objective, and said that he and all the other men thought we were going up into the harbor; that the admiral, Captain Chadwick, and I had been seen consulting the chart which took in the inner harbor, and they all thought that we would go inside three miles beyond the entrance. Such was the mission for which these brave men had so ardently volunteered.

At about a quarter of one Charette was sent to call the other men and take the bucket of coffee to the fire-room and bring it up steaming. About one I went on the bridge. Powell and the pilot were walking up and down. They pointed out the Morro, just discernible with the night-glasses, about five miles distant, bearing about northeast by the compass.

A fine-looking seaman was at the wheel. I went close and examined him, and said to myself: "Unless looks deceive, he is the man for the additional work with the torpedoes." Before being spoken to he asked if he might go with us. "What is your name and rate?" I asked. "Clausen, cockswain of the barge, sir." The rating confirmed my judgment from his looks, and I replied: "Yes; you may go. When relieved at the wheel you will be given your

THE RUN IN

station and duties." The delight in the man's face could be seen in the moonlight. Clausen's inclusion in the crew was thus entirely regular. The report that he was a stowaway was doubtless due to the fact that he was not in the original crew of six determined upon before the rearrangement of torpedo connections.

Powell reported that the admiral had directed the steam-launch, after putting off the *New York's* men on the nearest blockading vessel, to stand in toward the entrance and stand by to lend assistance to the *Merrimac's* crew in escaping. This measure had been suggested by me because the admiral seemed so solicitous about our escape when considering the question of going in at sunset. I had suggested the measure only in connection with the sunset plan, and made no further reference to it when decision was made against that hour, since it was questionable whether the chances of escape were sufficient to justify the exposure of the launch's crew. Powell's report was, therefore, a surprise. It was too late to consult the admiral again. His decision in the matter must be accepted. I asked Powell if his engines and fires were muffled. He answered yes, that he had put over canvas covers, that the launch's regular crew had all volunteered, and that all preparations had been made. It was interesting to see his own delight at the prospect of the work. We arranged the rendezvous. The launch would creep

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

up from the westward and watch for the appearance of boat or men. If the boat were destroyed and the men could not stand out against the tide running flood, he would endeavor to dash across the entrance for the rendezvous under the seaward side of the Morro, near the mouth of the caverns.

Charette now brought the coffee on the bridge; some sandwiches were at hand; all the crew came up, and also Mr. Crank from the engine-room, and we had a cheerful breakfast. Even the pipe came out as usual. About half-past one we "turned to," and the men went to their stations. I went the round, fore and aft, to go over the duties with each man. Murphy, on the forecastle, was given the same instructions that Mullen had had; in addition, after receiving the cord signal to cut the anchor-lashing, and after the lashing had been cut on the starboard side, he was to pass over to the port side and make contact to fire torpedo No. 1 without further orders. Murphy listened without a word to all the instructions concerning the precautions to be taken in view of the exposure in firing the torpedo: for the fore-castle was narrow, and while making contact he would still be in danger from the rushing chain and the breaking stops and hawsers; moreover, the fore-castle had no bulwark or rail, and though high above it, he would be exposed to a heavy blast from the torpedo explosion, the collision bulkhead being directly beneath. Indeed, it was intimated that he



THE LAST MEAL BEFORE ENTERING.

THE RUN IN

might be wounded by the explosion even under the best conditions of precaution. He examined the lashing and block under it, saw the new ax at hand, found the end of the signal-cord, examined the wire ends for making contact, and replied simply: "It shall be done, sir."

Charette was already familiar with torpedoes No. 2 and No. 3. Deignan was taken to torpedo No. 4, Phillips to torpedo No. 6, and Kelly to torpedo No. 8, and each was instructed as to the firing. Montague's duties were the same as for the first run. Deignan relieved Clausen at the wheel, and Clausen was taken to torpedo No. 5. Phillips and Kelly would have the same duties below as previously arranged. All were instructed about the rendezvous and directed afresh to lie on their faces except while executing work, and to pay no attention to the enemy's fire, no matter what it might be.

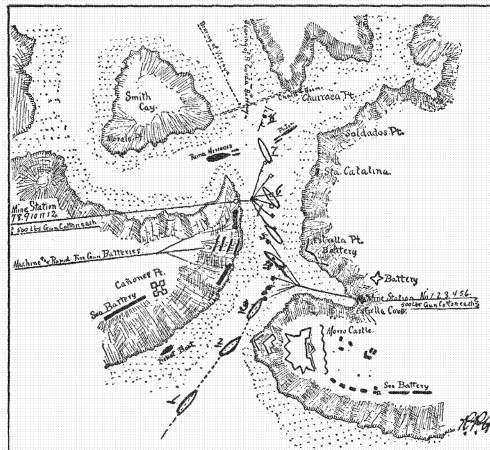
Good-bys were now exchanged. The *New York's* men, Powell, and the pilot disembarked. Just then Mr. Crank came up and reported engines and boilers ready for the run, the boilers requiring no further firing. The launch had shoved off and was some distance away, and Mr. Crank repeated the tender of his services to go in. It would have been wrong to accept them. I hailed the launch. There was no reply. Then I hailed again, louder. Still there was no reply. On a still louder hail it stopped, came back, and took Mr. Crank. Then it was that

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

this gallant engineer left the *Merrimac*. He had not gone from her for a moment during the whole course of preparations, had not had a moment's rest in two days and two nights, and had been repairing the boilers and putting them in shape while the others were unengaged. He had expected to go in the first day and had passed through all the experience of suspense preceding action.

The launch headed for the *Texas* and was soon lost sight of. Preparation was ended. The road was clear. The hour for execution had come.

The *Merrimac* was heading about west-southwest. The engine telegraph was turned to "slow speed ahead," the helm was put astarboard, and we gathered headway and swung round by the southward and stood up slowly on the course. The moon was about an hour and a half high, and steering for the Morro, we were running straight down the reflected path of light. To clear this we stood to the eastward of the course, and crept along obliquely at about four knots. Charette was sent to see that all the men were equipped and the revolvers loaded. It took only a short time to strip off uniforms and put on revolver-belts and life-preservers. Charette soon came back and reported that all the men were equipped except the two below, who had stripped to breech-cloths, and who asked permission to leave their revolver-belts and life-preservers at the head of the hatch on account of the inconven-



Drawn by E. S. Gielow, under the supervision of Mr. Hobson.

PLAN OF THE MANEUVER AS EXECUTED JUNE 3, 1898.

EXPLANATIONS.

1. Position when engine was stopped.
2. Position when helm was last in operation.
3. Position when bow anchor was let go and torpedoes were fired.
4. Position when struck by mine explosion, just before starboard quarter grounded on Estrella Point.
- 5-7. Positions as the tide wrenched vessel off Estrella Point, and set her down channel—vessel gradually straightening out.
8. Position when sunk.
- . Submarine mines unexploded, mines Nos. 9, 10, 11, 12.
- . Submarine mines fired at vessel, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.
- *. Submarine mine that struck vessel, No. 5.
- ✱. Automatic torpedoes fired by *Reina Mercedes* and *Pluton*.

NOTE.—The exact location of mines is not known. It would be perhaps fairly accurate to subdivide the distance between the extreme positions into eight equal parts, following the middle of the channel.

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

ience of wearing them while working engines and boilers.

As we stood on, the outlines of Morro and other shore objects became clearer and clearer. The blockading vessels were miles behind. When we arrived within about two thousand yards there could be no further question of surprise. In the bright moonlight we were in clear view, and our movements must long since have caused suspicion. The enemy was now doubtless on the verge of sounding the general alarm, if indeed it had not already been sounded. The orders were: "Full speed ahead!" "Steady astarboard!" and the engine telegraph recorded prompt execution, Deignan repeating in firm voice: "Steady astarboard, sir." The vessel responded as if animated. The foam began to fly from our anchors, which, slung over bow and quarter, just trailed in the water, and our bow swung round to the northward and westward. "Meet her!" was the order. "Meet her, sir," was the reply. "Steady!" "Steady, sir." We stood down toward the course for entering. Charette was sent below to tell Phillips and Kelly that we were on the final run and that the signal to stop would be the signal to open up sea connections and then "lay up" on deck by the torpedoes, and both were directed to put on revolver-belt and life-preserver as soon as they reached the deck.

Morro drew farther to starboard. It bore north,

THE RUN IN

then north by east, then north-northeast. We must keep clear of the two-fathom bank and not over-reach to the westward. "Nothing to the westward?" "Nothing to the westward, sir." Morro bears north-east by north. "Port!" "Port, sir." "Steady!" "Steady, sir." "Port a little!" "Port a little, sir." Morro bears northeast. "Steady!" "Steady, sir." "Head for the Morro!" "Head for the Morro, sir." The night-glasses showed up Estrella. "Can you make out the white spot to the left of Morro?" "Yes, sir." "That is Estrella. Steer for Estrella!" "Steer for Estrella, sir." The swell approaching the entrance might tend to set our stern to port. "Watch the helm!" "Watch the helm, sir." "Do not let her yaw, but use only a gentle helm!" "Aye, aye, sir." Deignan's whole thought was centered on his helm. He seemed to forestall any deviating tendency, and the heavy collier kept as straight as a handy yacht, and on we drove down the exact course. Morro drew higher in the sky, and the western side of the entrance, though dim as expected, showed the bald spot of the sea battery on top.

We were within five hundred yards, and still no token from the enemy, though the silence was ominous. Ah, we should make the channel now, no matter what they might do! I knew how long the vessel carried headway, we were making nearly nine knots, and soon the flood-tide would help,

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

while we had over seven thousand tons of reserve buoyancy, which would carry us the required distance even under a mortal wound.

Another ship's length, and a flash darted out from the water's edge at the left side of the entrance. The expected crash through the ship's side did not follow, nor did the projectile pass over; it must have gone astern. Strange to miss at such short range! Another flash—another miss! This time the projectile plainly passed astern. Night-glasses on the spot revealed a dark object—a picket-boat with rapid-fire guns lying in the shadow. As sure as fate he was firing at our rudder, and we should be obliged to pass him broadside within a ship's length! If we only had had a rapid-fire gun we could have disposed of the miserable object in ten seconds; yet there he lay unmolested, firing point-blank at our exposed rudder, so vital to complete success. A flash of rage and exasperation passed over me. The admiration due this gallant little picket-boat did not come till afterward. Glasses on the starboard bow showed the sharp, steep, step-like fall with which the western point of Morro drops into the water. This was the looked-for guide, the channel carrying deep water right up to the wall. "A touch of port helm!" was the order. "A touch of port helm, sir," was the response. "Steady!" "Steady, sir." Now, even without helm, we should pass down safe. Suddenly there was a crash from the port side.

THE RUN IN

"The western battery has opened on us, sir!" called Charette, who was still on the bridge, waiting to take the message to the engine-room if telegraph and signal-cord should be shot away. "Very well; pay no attention to it," I replied, without turning, Morro Point, on the starboard side, requiring all attention. The latter part of the answer was spoken for the benefit of the helmsman. "Mind your helm!" "Mind the helm, sir." "Nothing to starboard?" "Nothing to starboard, sir." The clear, firm voice of Deignan told that there need be no fear of his distraction. I estimated the distance to Morro Point at about three ships' lengths, and wondered if the men below would stand till we covered another ship's length, two ships' lengths being the distance at which it had been decided to give the signal to stop. All of a sudden, *whir! cling!* came a projectile across the bridge and struck something. I looked. The engine telegraph was still there. Deignan and the binnacle were still standing. Two and a half ships' lengths! Two ships' lengths! Then over the engine telegraph went the order: "Stop." Sure and steady the answer-pointer turned. There need have been no anxiety about the constancy of the brave men below.

The engine stopped, and somehow I knew the sea connections were thrown open. This has been a puzzle to me ever since. For how could the

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

bonnet flying off, or the ax-blows on copper piping, or the inrush of water make enough noise or vibration to be heard or felt on the bridge, particularly with guns firing and projectiles striking? It may be that the condition of expectation and the fact of the fulfilment of the first part of the order suggested the conclusion, but sure I was that the connections were open and that the ship was beginning to settle.

"You may 'lay down' to your torpedoes now, Charette." "Aye, aye, sir." On the vessel forged, straight and sure the bow entered. Morro shut off the sky to the right. The firing now became general, but we were passing the crisis of navigation and could spare attention to nothing else. A swell seemed to set our stern to port, and the bow swung heavily toward Morro, which we had hugged close intentionally. "Starboard!" "Starboard, sir." Still we swung starboard! "Starboard, I say!" "The helm's astarboard, sir."

Our bow must have come within thirty feet of Morro rock before the vessel began to recover from the sheer, and we passed it close aboard. "Meet her!" "Meet her, sir." The steering-gear was still ours, and only about half a ship's length more and we should be in the position chosen for the manoeuvre. The sky began to open up beyond Morro. There was the cove. Yes; there was the position! "Hard aport!" "Hard aport, sir." No response of the ship! "Hard aport, I say!" "The

THE RUN IN

helm is hard aport, sir, and lashed." "Very well, Deignan," I said; "lay down to your torpedo."

Oh, heaven! Our steering-gear was gone, shot away at the last moment, and we were charging forward straight down the channel!

It is difficult to state just how the steering-gear was disabled. The Spanish lieutenant in charge of the picket-boat claimed that he shot away the rudder and the whole stern structure. It is certain, however, that he had not done this up to a point within half a ship's length from the position where the helm was ordered to be put over. As referred to farther on, Montague reported a large projectile wrecking the stern structure as it cut the anchor-lashing. This shell may have destroyed the rudder-head in addition. Charette reported that when he was examining the torpedo connections after they had failed to fire, he noticed that the chain that led from the tiller to the wheel on the bridge along the upper deck had been shot away. The steering-gear may have been disabled thus in any one or in all of these ways.

We must have had four and three quarters knots' speed of our own, and the tide must have been fully a knot and a half. What ground-tackle could hold against a mass of over seven thousand tons moving with a velocity of six knots? We stood on a little longer to reduce the speed further. A pull on Murphy's cord to stand by,—three steady pulls,

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—the bow-anchor fell. A pause, then a shock, a muffled ring above the blast of guns: torpedo No. 1 had gone off promptly and surely, and I knew that the collision bulkhead was gone.

If the bow-chain in breaking would only give us a sheer and the other torpedoes proved as sure, we should have but a short interval to float, and holding on to the stern-anchor, letting go only at the last moment, we might still effectually block the channel. An interval elapsed and grew longer—no answer from torpedo No. 2, none from No. 3. Thereupon I crossed the bridge and shouted: "Fire all torpedoes!" My voice was drowned. Again and again I yelled the order, with hands over mouth, directing the sound forward, below, aft.

It was useless. The rapid-fire and machine-gun batteries on Socapa slope had opened up at full blast, and projectiles were exploding and clanging. For noise, it was Niagara magnified. Soon Charette came running up. "Torpedoes 2 and 3 will not fire, sir; the cells are shattered all over the deck." "Very well; lay down and underrun all the others, beginning at No. 4, and spring them as soon as possible." In a moment No. 5 went off with a fine ring. Deignan had waited for No. 2 and No. 3, and not hearing them had tried his own, but had found the connections broken and the cells shattered. He then went down to Clausen at No. 5. No other torpedo responded. No. 6 and No. 8 had suffered

THE RUN IN

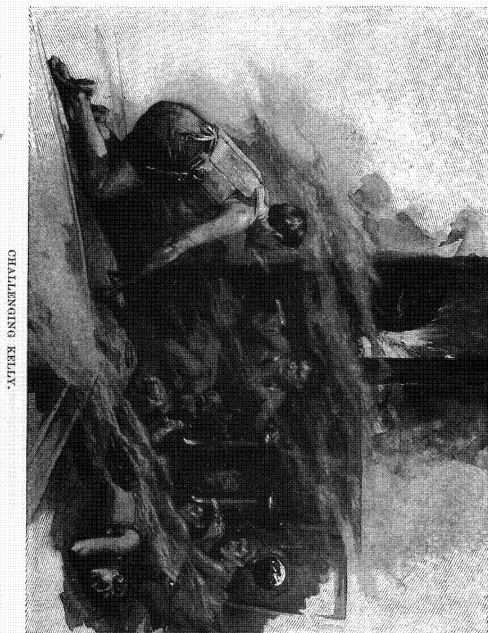
the same fate as Nos. 2, 3, and 4. With only two exploded torpedoes we should be some time sinking, and the stern-anchor would be of first importance. I determined to go down aft and stand over to direct it personally, letting go at the opportune moment.

Passing along the starboard gangway, I reached the rendezvous. Stepping over the men, they appeared to be all present. There was Charette, returned from a second attempt at the torpedoes. There could be no further hope from that quarter, and, oh! there was Montague! The stern-anchor, then, was already gone. If the chain was broken, we should have no further means of controlling our position. Looking over the bulwarks, I saw that we were just in front of Estrella, apparently motionless, lying about two thirds athwart the channel, the bow to the westward. Could it be that the ground-tackle had held? Then we should block the channel in spite of all. I watched, almost breathless, taking a range of the bow against the shore-line. The bow moved, the stern moved—oh, heaven! the chains were gone! The tide was setting us down and would straighten us out if the stern should touch first. Oh, for the war-heads to put her down at once! But we were helpless. I said nothing to Montague about having let go the stern-anchor,—indeed, gave him no evidence of my chagrin,—for he had been instructed that if no signal

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

came from the bridge he should let go a short time after the torpedoes ceased going off; and, moreover, the signal-cord from the bridge had been broken. It was not until weeks after our exchange that I ventured a reference to the subject, when he told me that he had seen that we were not swinging athwart as expected, and had not let go the anchor himself, but that a large projectile coming from ahead over the port bow, apparently from a ship, had exploded aft, wrecking everything in the vicinity, and cutting the lashing that held the anchor!

There was nothing further to do but to accept the situation. We mustered, counting heads, and thought all were present; but we must have counted wrongly, for after a minute or two Kelly came across the deck on all fours. He had done his duty below with promptness and precision, and had come on deck to stand by his torpedo. While putting on his life-preserver a large projectile had exploded close at hand,—he thought against the mainmast,—and he had been thrown with violence on the deck, face down, his upper lip being cut away on the right side. He must have lain there some little time unconscious, and had got up completely dazed, without memory. He looked on one side and then the other, saw the engine-room hatch,—the first object recognized,—and, under the force of habit, started down it, but found the way blocked by water, which had risen up around the cylinders.



CHALLENGING KELLY.

THE RUN IN

The sight of the water seemed to bring back memory, and soon the whole situation dawned upon him; he mounted again, and with heroic devotion went to his torpedo, only to find the cells and connections destroyed, when he started for the rendezvous. He had, indeed, brought his revolver-belt, so as to be in uniform, and adjusted it after reaching us. His reception must have seemed strange, for it was at the muzzle of my revolver. Thinking that our men were all at hand, it was a strange sensation to see a man come up on all fours, stealthily, as it seemed, from behind the hatch. Could they be boarding us so soon? My revolver covered him at once, and I looked to see if others followed. It was not until the revolver was almost in his face that the unusual uniform showed that the man was one of us. The idea of the Spaniards boarding us under the condition seemed ridiculous the moment the man was accounted for, and the mental processes and the action taken must have belonged to the class of reflex or spontaneous phenomena. Charette told me that he also, when he saw the man, drew his revolver with the idea of repelling boarders.

We were now moving bodily onward with the tide, Estrella Point being just ahead of the starboard quarter. A blasting shock, a lift, a pull, a series of vibrations, and a mine exploded directly beneath us. My heart leaped with exultation.

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"Lads, they are helping us!" I looked to see the deck break, but it still held. I looked over the side to see her settle at once, but the rate was only slightly increased. Then came the thought, Could it be that the coal had deadened the shock and choked the breach, or had the breach been made just where we were already flooded by sea connection and torpedo No. 5? A sense of indescribable disappointment swept over me. I looked again: no encouragement. But ah! we had stopped, Estrella Point had caught us strong, and we were steadily sinking two thirds athwart. The work was done, and the rest was only a question of time. We could now turn our attention toward the course of action to be taken next.

Upon arriving at the rendezvous, I ordered that no man move till further orders, and repeated the order to Kelly when he arrived. The order had been obeyed without murmur. I then said to them: "We will remain here, lads, till the moon sets. When it is dark we will go down the after-hatch, to the coal, where her stern will be left out of water. Some of us will come up and get the rifles and cartridges from the boat. We will remain inside all day, and to-night at ebb-tide try to make our way to the squadron. If the enemy comes on board, we will remain quiet until he finds us, and will repel him. If he then turns artillery on the place where we are, we will swim out to points farther forward." Such

THE RUN IN

were my plans when it seemed we should remain on Estrella Point and sink by the bow with the stern out. I added: "Remain as you are, lads; I am going to take a turn to reconnoiter." I wanted to go forward to hoist the flag. "Please do not, sir," pleaded Charette, when he discovered my intention. "If you go they will see you and will see us all." He was right. It would be wrong to take the risk. There might be a better chance when it became dark. "Very well, then," I said; "I will not go." I looked over the bulwarks to observe again the speed of sinking and take note of the enemy's fire. "Here is a chock, sir, where you can look out without putting your head over the rail," called Charette. The hole was large, just above the deck, and well suited for observation. It was doubtless a valuable find of Charette's, for the patter of bullets had continued to increase, and now repeating-rifles were firing down on us from Estrella, just above.¹ It is remarkable, indeed, that some of these men did not see us, for though the moon was low, it was bright, and there we were with white life-preservers almost at the muzzles of their guns. The pouring out of ammunition into the ship at

¹ While in prison the men were told by Spanish soldiers that the troops of the Sixty-fifth Regiment were lining the eastern side of the entrance, and troops of the Seventy-fifth Regiment the western side; and the writer was informed by a Spanish army officer that troops were ordered in from far and near, a detachment from Santiago, of which he was a member, arriving only as the *Merrimac* sank.

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

large must have prevented them from seeking special targets with deliberation.

The deafening roar of artillery, however, came from the other side, just opposite our position. There were the rapid-fire guns of different calibers, the unmistakable Hotchkiss revolving cannon, the quick succession and pause of the Nordenfelt multi-barrel, and the tireless automatic gun.¹ A deadly fire came from ahead, apparently from shipboard. These larger projectiles would enter, explode, and rake us; those passing over the spar-deck would

¹ Just after the surrender of Santiago, when I went in to assist Lieutenant Capehart, who was detailed to raise the mines, I took occasion to look at the batteries on Socapa, and found in place the following: in the sea battery, two 16-centimeter (6.3-inch) breech-loading rapid-fire, and three 9-inch mortars, studded system, old pattern; on the slope opposite Estrella, one Nordenfelt 57-millimeter rapid-fire, one Nordenfelt four-barrel 25-millimeter, and four Hotchkiss 37-millimeter revolving cannon. There were emplacements from which guns had been removed, and it was impossible to tell what was the full strength of the battery when the *Merrimac* entered. I was informed that after the landing of United States troops a general redistribution of artillery took place, guns placed

along the entrance being transferred to the defense of the city. I was also informed that the batteries of the destroyers had been used ashore at the entrance, but had been put back on the boats before they left the harbor on July 3.

It may be added that eight observation mines were found to have been fired at the *Merrimac*—all of the six from the Estrella station, and two of the six from the Socapa station, leaving only four, there being no material to replace the ones fired. Powell in his report of his observations speaks of seeing seven simultaneous columns of water as from torpedoes. As only two of my torpedoes went off, and at different times, this would indicate that six of these must have been from the Estrella station mines.



THE "MERRIMAC" AROUND AND UNDER FIRE OFF ESTRELLA POINT.

THE RUN IN

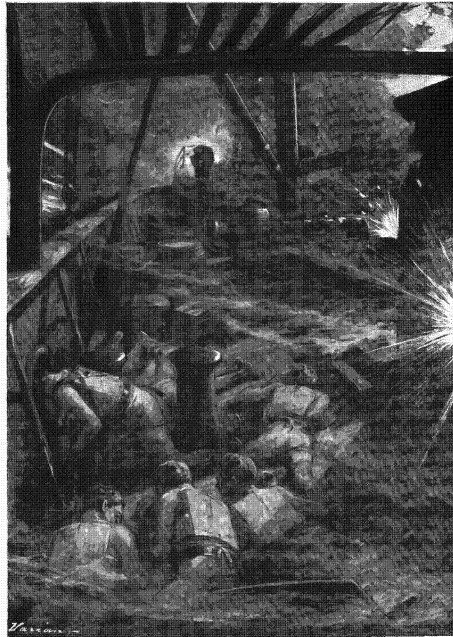
apparently pass through the deck-house, far enough away to cause them to explode just in front of us. All firing was at point-blank range, at a target that could hardly be missed, the Socapa batteries with plunging fire, the ships' batteries with horizontal fire. The striking projectiles and flying fragments produced a grinding sound, with a fine ring in it of steel on steel.

The deck vibrated heavily, and we felt the full effect, lying, as we were, full-length on our faces. At each instant it seemed that certainly the next would bring a projectile among us. The impulse surged strong to get away from a place where remaining seemed death, and the men suggested taking to the boat and jumping overboard; but I knew that any object leaving the ship would be seen, and to be seen was certain death, and, therefore, I directed all to remain motionless. The test of discipline was severe, but not a man moved, not even when a projectile plunged into the boiler, and a rush of steam came up the deck not far from where we lay. The men expected a boiler explosion, but accepted my assurance that it would be only a steam-escape. While lying thus, a singular physiological phenomenon occurred. After a few minutes, one of the men asked for the canteen, saying that his lips had begun to parch; then another asked, then another, and it was passed about to all. Only a few minutes had elapsed when they

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

all asked again, and I felt my own lips begin to parch and my mouth to get dry. It seemed very singular, so I felt my pulse, and found it entirely normal, and took account of the state of the nervous system. It was, if anything, more phlegmatic than usual, observation and reason taking account of the conditions without the participation of the emotions. Projectiles, indeed, were every moment expected among us, but they would have been taken in the same way. Reason took account of probabilities, and, according to the direction of the men's bodies with regard to the line of fire from the ships' guns, I waited to see one man's leg, another man's shoulder, the top of another man's head, taken off. I looked for my own body to be cut in two diagonally, from the left hip upward, and wondered for a moment what the sensation would be. Not having pockets, tourniquets had been carried loosely around my left arm, and a roll of antiseptic lint was held in my left hand. These were placed in readiness.

We must have remained thus for eight or ten minutes, while the guns fired ammunition as in a proving-ground test for speed. I was looking out of the chock, when it seemed that we were moving. A range was taken on the shore. Yes, the bow moved. Sunk deep, the tide was driving it on and straightening us out. My heart sank. Oh, for the war-heads! Why did not the admiral let us have



ON THE DECK OF THE "MERRIMAC."

THE RUN IN

them! The tide wrenched us off *Estrella*, straightened us out, and set us right down the channel toward the part where its width increases. Though sinking fast, there still remained considerable free-board, which would admit of our going some distance, and we were utterly helpless to hasten the sinking.

A great wave of disappointment set over me; it was anguish as intense as the exultation a few minutes before. On the tide set us, as straight as a pilot and tugboats could have guided. Socapa station fired two mines, but, alas! they missed us, and we approached the bight leading to Churruca Point to the right, and the bight cutting off Smith Cay from Socapa on the left, causing the enlargement of the channel. I saw with dismay that it was no longer possible to block completely. The *Merrimac* gave a premonitory lurch, then staggered to port in a death-throe. The bow almost fell, it sank so rapidly. We crossed the keel-line of a vessel removed a few hundred feet away, behind Socapa; it was the *Reina Mercedes*. Her bow torpedoes bore on us. Ah! to the right the *Pluton* was coming up from the bight, her torpedoes bearing. But, alas! cruiser and destroyer were both too late to help us. They were only in at the death.¹

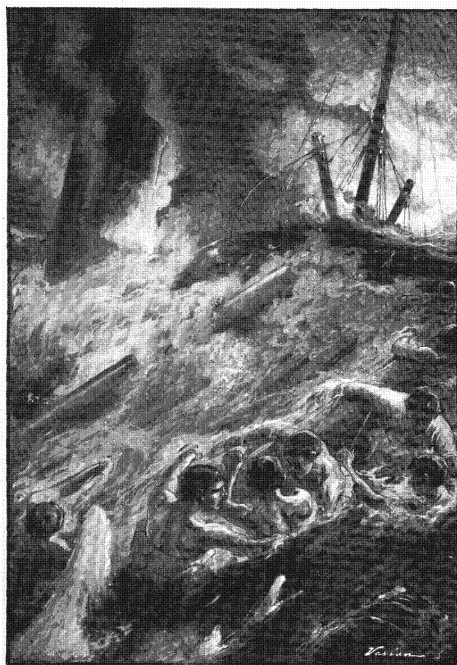
¹ It was found that the *Reina Mercedes* fired both bow torpedoes, afterward that the *Pluton* had fired her torpedoes. The day following and Admiral Cervera informed me our entrance, two automobile tor-

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

The stricken vessel now reeled to port. Some one said: "She is going to turn over on us, sir," to which I replied: "No; she will right herself in sinking, and we shall be the last spot to go under." The firing suddenly ceased. The vessel lowered her head like a faithful animal, proudly aware of its sacrifice, bowed below the surface, and plunged forward. The stern rose and heeled heavily; it stood for a moment, shuddering, then started downward, righting as it went.

A great rush of water came up the gangway, seething and gurgling out of the deck. The mass was whirling from right to left "against the sun"; it seized us and threw us against the bulwarks, then over the rail. Two were swept forward as if by a momentary recession, and one was carried down into a coal-bunker—luckless Kelly. In a moment, however, with increased force, the water shot him up out of the same hole and swept him among us. The bulwarks disappeared. A sweeping vortex whirled above. We charged about with casks, cans, and spars, the incomplete stripping having left quantities on the deck. The life-preservers stood us in good stead, preventing chests from being crushed, as well as buoying us on the surface; for

pedoes were found outside, having drifted with the current, and, what they did, we did not feel the effects where we were. In any case they could not have appreciably affected the sinking.



THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC."

THE RUN IN

spars came end on like battering-rams, and the sharp corners of tin cans struck us heavily.

The experience of being swept over the side was rather odd. The water lifted and threw me against the bulwarks, the rail striking my waist; the upper part of the body was bent out, the lower part and the legs being driven heavily against what seemed to be the plating underneath, which, singularly enough, appeared to open. A foot-ball instinct came promptly, and I drew up my knees; but it seemed too late, and apparently they were being driven through the steel plate, a phenomenon that struck me as being most singular; yet there it was, and I wondered what the sensation would be like in having the legs carried out on one side of the rail, and the body on the other, concluding that some embarrassment must be expected in swimming without legs. The situation was apparently relieved by the rail going down. Afterward Charette asked: "Did those oil-cans that were left just forward of us trouble you also as we were swept out?" Perhaps cans, and not steel plates, separated before my kneecaps.

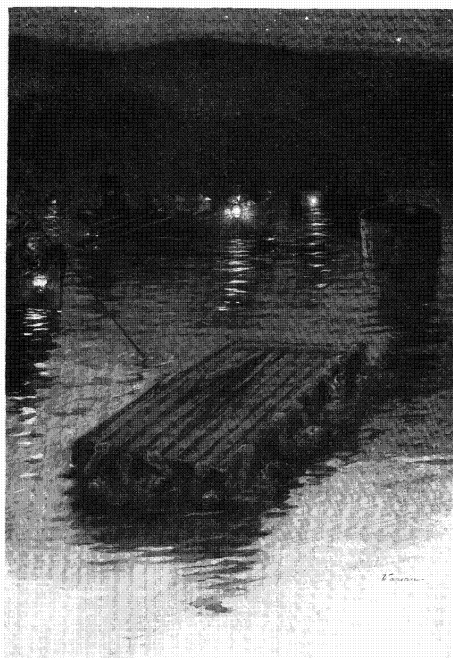
When we looked for the life-boat we found that it had been carried away. The catamaran was the largest piece of floating debris; we assembled about it. The line suspending it from the cargo-boom held and anchored us to the ship, though barely long enough to reach the surface, causing the raft

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

to turn over and set us scrambling as the line came taut.

The firing had ceased. It was evident the enemy had not seen us in the general mass of moving objects; but soon the tide began to drift these away, and we were being left alone with the catamaran. The men were directed to cling close in, bodies below and only heads out, close under the edges, and were directed not to speak above a whisper, for the destroyer was near at hand, and boats were passing near. We mustered; all were present, and direction was given to remain as we were till further orders, for I was sure that in due time after daylight a responsible officer would come out to reconnoiter. It was evident that we could not swim against the tide to reach the entrance. Moreover, the shores were lined with troops, and the small boats were looking for victims that might escape from the vessel. The only chance lay in remaining undiscovered until the coming of the reconnoitering boat, to which, perhaps, we might surrender without being fired on.

The moon was now low. The shadow of Socapa fell over us, and soon it was dark. The sunken vessel was bubbling up its last lingering breath. The boats' crews looking for refugees pulled closer, peering with lanterns, and again the discipline of the men was put to severe test, for time and again it seemed that the boats would come up, and the



SPANIARDS SEARCHING FOR THE CREW WITH LANTERNS.

THE RUN IN

impulse to swim away was strong. A suggestion was made to cut the line and let the catamaran drift away. This was also emphatically forbidden, for we should thus miss the reconnoitering boat and certainly fall into less responsible hands. Here, as before, the men strictly obeyed orders, though the impulse for safety was strong to the contrary, and *sauve qui peut* would have been justifiable, if it is ever justifiable.

The air was chilly and the water positively cold. In less than five minutes our teeth were chattering; so loud, indeed, did they chatter that it seemed the destroyer or the boats would hear. It was in marked contrast with the parched lips of a few minutes before. In spite of their efforts, two of the men soon began to cough, and it seemed that we should surely be discovered. I worked my legs and body under the raft for exercise, but, in spite of all, the shivers would come and the teeth would chatter.

We remained there probably an hour. Frogs croaked up the bight, and as dawn broke, the birds began to twitter and chirp in the bushes and trees near at hand along the wooded slopes. Day came bright and beautiful. It seemed that nature disregarded man and went on the same, serene, peaceful, and unmoved. Man's strife appeared a discord, and his tragedy received no sympathy.

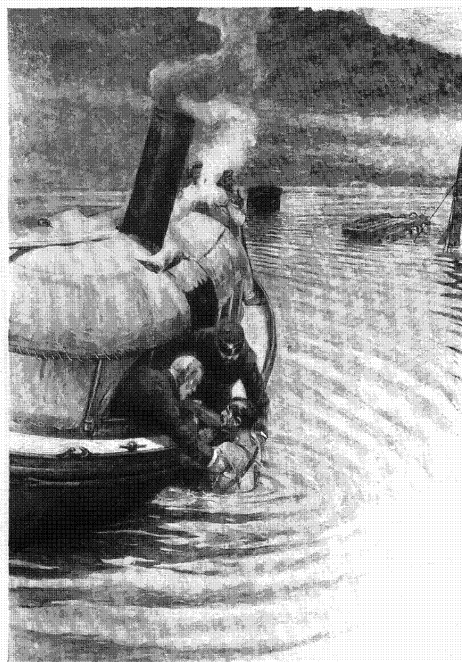
About daybreak a beautiful strain went up from

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

a bugle at Punta Gorda battery. It was pitched at a high key, and rose and lingered, long drawn out, gentle and tremulous; it seemed as though an angel might be playing while looking down in tender pity. Could this be a Spanish bugle?

Broad daylight came. The sun spotted the mountain-tops in the distance and glowed on Morro and Socapa heights. The destroyer got up anchor and drew back again up the bight. We were still undiscovered.

Some one now announced: "A steam-launch is heading for us, sir." I looked around, and found that a launch of large size, with the curtains aft drawn down, was coming from the bight around Smith Cay and heading straight for us. That must be the reconnoitering party. It swerved a little to the left as if to pass around us, giving no signs of having seen us. No one was visible on board, everybody apparently being kept below the rail. When it was about thirty yards off I hailed. The launch stopped as if frightened, and backed furiously. A squad of riflemen filed out, and formed in a semicircle on the forecastle, and came to a "load," "ready," "aim." A murmur passed about among my men: "They are going to shoot us." A bitter thought flashed through my mind: "The miserable cowards! A brave nation will learn of this and call for an account." But the volley did not follow. The aim must have been for caution



THE RESCUE BY ADMIRAL CERVERA.

THE RUN IN

only, and it was apparent that there must be an officer on board in control.

I called out in a strong voice to know if there was not an officer in the boat; if so, an American officer wished to speak with him with a view to surrendering himself and seamen as prisoners of war. The curtain was raised; an officer leaned out and waved his hand, and the rifles came down. I struck out for the launch and climbed on board aft with the assistance of the officer, who, hours afterward, we learned was Admiral Cervera himself. With him were two other officers, his juniors. To him I surrendered myself and the men, taking off my revolver-belt, glasses, canteen, and life-preserver. The officers looked astonished at first, perhaps at the singular uniforms and the begrimed condition of us all, due to the fine coal and oil that came to the surface; then a current of kindness seemed to pass over them, and they exclaimed: "Valiente!" Then the launch steamed up to the catamaran, and the men climbed on board, the two who had been coughing being in the last stages of exhaustion and requiring to be lifted. We were prisoners in Spanish hands.

PART III

IMPRISONMENT IN MORRO CASTLE

Generous reception on the *Mercedes*—A surprise for the Spanish officers—How the news of the crew's safety came to be sent to Admiral Sampson—Reflections on the result of the manœuver—Removal to the Morro—Courtesies from Admiral Cervera—In the cell of the Morro—Captain Bustamante's kindness—"Every man would do it again to-night, sir"—Comforts from the British consul—Astonishing report of casualties in the *Merrimac* affair—Why the manœuver failed—A fancy of what might have happened—Our rations—Spanish and American soldiers compared—More courtesies—A reconnaissance from the cell window—A midnight intruder—A question of humanity—Supplies from the fleet—An official inquiry—Thoughts of escape—Under fire from the American fleet—Inventing a plan of attack—After the bombardment.

WHEN we were all on board and had laid aside our arms and accoutrements, the launch headed about and stood for the *Reina Mercedes*, and I directed the men, who were shivering, to get down near the furnace, to which no objection was raised. Not a word was spoken till we reached the *Mercedes*. However great may have been their curiosity and interest, the officers, after their first kind words of



CONTRAALMIRANTE PASCUAL CERVERA Y TOPETE.

IMPRISONMENT IN MORRO CASTLE

greeting, forbore to ask questions or make remarks. When we came alongside, the senior officer asked if I would be good enough to go on board with my men. So courteous was his manner, we might have been guests coming to breakfast. The officer of the deck and the executive officer met us at the head of the gangway. I bowed salute, and inspected the men for their condition. Those who were still shivering were sent forward at once for stimulants and friction. Kelly's lip showed a wide gash that had become clogged with coal-dust. Murphy had a wound in his right hip, twelve or fourteen inches in length and perhaps a quarter or a half of an inch in depth, which he had received in the blast when he fired torpedo No. 1; and though the wound certainly must have been very painful, he had not uttered a groan or made any reference to it during all the time that had elapsed. It was only after our arrival on the *Mercedes* that we learned of it. The men were all more or less scratched and bruised from colliding with objects in the vortex whirl, but there was no injury of consequence, the life-preservers having formed excellent buffers. The executive officer followed the inspection, and gave directions for the care of the men. Kelly and Murphy went to the surgeon, and all were given facilities for washing and were supplied with dry clothing.

We found the crew of the *Mercedes* scrubbing

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

down decks and clearing up after the engagement. Everybody seemed to be on deck, and the men, singly and in groups, stared at us with wild-eyed astonishment. Our unconventional uniforms had suffered in adjustment, and they must have thought us an odd-looking group of man-of-war's-men.

The men having gone forward, the executive officer invited me to his state-room, had a bath prepared for me and clothing of his own set out, and invited me to come into the ward-room, when ready, and join him at breakfast. The oil and fine coal that had come to the surface had had full chance to permeate, and made heavy bath-work, while the executive officer's civilian clothing, made for a different build, was of questionable fit. But the difficulties due to excess of girth secured the return of my sword-belt when it had been dried out. Special full dress, however, could not have brought out a whit more courteous and cordial treatment.

After a hearty hand-shake of congratulation and repeated kind words, the executive officer, with thoughtful reference to our exposure, ordered stimulants. I told him, however, that I was in good shape, none the worse off, and that the breakfast coffee, I was sure, would be sufficient. He gave me his card: "Emilio J. de Acosta y Eyermann, Capitán de Fragata," adding in pencil: "2° Comandante del Cruc° *Reina Mercedes*," and I told him my name



CAPTAIN DON EMILIO J. DE ACOSTA.
Killed in the bombardment of June 6.

IMPRISONMENT IN MORRO CASTLE

and rank. While eating, we fell into frank and general conversation, all the officers except one having finished breakfast. Captain Acosta gallantly opened the conversation by saying that there was no reason why officers engaged in honorable warfare, though opposing to their utmost in battle, might not be the best of friends. He went on to describe how he himself had directed the fire of two heavy guns against the entering vessel, though a large part of his crew were absent manning guns that had been put ashore, and how he had finally sunk her by two Whitehead torpedoes from his bow tubes, remarking that the mines fired at us seemed to have missed, going astern. He added that, of course, it was an unequal fight; that, in fact, it seemed to him that we should have known from the natural formation of the entrance that it would be impossible for a vessel to force her way through.

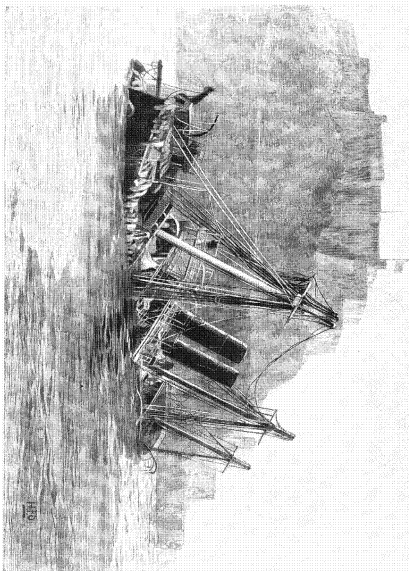
He then asked what battery we had. I had just referred to being on duty on the *New York*, and understood him to refer to her, and in reply enumerated her battery, mentioning that he would find it in any of the naval annuals. This seemed to agree with what he had concluded was the battery, and he then asked how many men we had lost. I told him we had lost none. He asked where, then, were all the crew, and all those that were below in the engine- and boiler-rooms and magazines. I

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

saw that he had been referring all the time to the vessel that came in, and told him that she was the *Merrimac*, a collier, and had no guns at all; that we had sunk her ourselves, and would have sunk her athwart near Estrella if the steering-gear had not been shot away and nearly all our own torpedoes disabled; adding that, though one of their mines had struck us, it was doubtful if it had assisted our sinking to any extent, and that we had felt no shock from the automobile torpedoes fired by the *Mercedes*.

He seemed utterly incredulous. The same experience was met with in the case of the other Spanish officers. The explosions of their own projectiles must have been taken for the firing of guns on board the *Merrimac*. Some went so far as to locate two heavy turrets with two guns each, one forward and one aft, and a battery of rapid-fire guns amidships. Apparently the facts were accepted only after information from the outside, derived either from the *New York* by the boat which subsequently took out a flag of truce, or from the United States via Madrid. When we had finished breakfast, the commanding officer, who had come to the gangway when we first came on board, came into the ward-room. I was introduced, and he gave me his card: "Rafael Micon, Capitán de Navio," below which he had written: "Admira al valiente capitán y le dona gran suerte." I told him

THE "RHINA MERCEDES," SUNK JULY 4, 1868, AND MORRO CASTLE FROM THE WEST.



IMPRISONMENT IN MORRO CASTLE

my name and rank, and he expressed surprise, as had Captain Acosta, that a constructor should be engaged in military duty at the seat of war. It was difficult to explain to him that our constructors are recruited differently from those abroad, having the same military training as line officers. We fell into general conversation, in which he philosophized on the question of the war, pointing out that the Cubans were ungrateful and, in general, a bad lot; that Cuba itself was really an encumbrance upon Spain; that it was recognized, in fact, that Cuba was lost, and Spain fought only for tradition and honor. This seems to have been the general view of the officers with whom I conversed afterward. These observations were made in a delicate way, without involving the attitude of the United States; but I made no reply to them.

When Captain Micon left, I asked for writing-materials: for I had concluded to try to communicate with Admiral Sampson, with a view to getting information sent out that would allay the anxiety of our families; since it was evident that, from their observation of the magnitude of the fire directed upon the *Merrimac*, our friends on the fleet would give us all up for lost. The information was directed to Admiral Sampson, and the Spanish commander-in-chief was requested to send it out under flag of truce. The two communications read as follows:

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

To Admiral Sampson:

SPANISH SHIP "REINA MERCEDES,"

SANTIAGO DE CUBA, June 3, 1898.

SIR: I have the honor to report that the *Merrimac* is sunk in the channel. No loss, only bruises. We are prisoners of war, being well cared for.

Very respectfully,

R. P. HOBSON,

Assistant Naval Constructor, U. S. N.

Commander-in-Chief U. S. Naval Forces,
Off Santiago de Cuba.

To Admiral Cervera:

SPANISH SHIP "REINA MERCEDES,"

SANTIAGO DE CUBA, June 3, 1898.

SIR: I have the honor to request that the inclosed communication be sent under flag of truce to the commander-in-chief of the United States forces off Santiago de Cuba.

Very respectfully,

RICHMOND PEARSON HOBSON,

Assistant Naval Constructor,

United States Navy.

To Commander-in-Chief Spanish Forces,
Santiago de Cuba.

The report to Admiral Sampson was first drafted to read: "I have the honor to report that the *Merrimac* is sunk in the channel—not where planned, but the best that could be done. No loss," etc.; but I thought that the additional clause would be more likely to prevent the delivery of the commu-

draft

Spanish Ship Reina Mercedes
Santiago de Cuba,
June 3rd 1898.

Sir: -

I have the honor to report that the
Mermaid ^{sunk} is in the channel, ~~not where~~
~~planned but the best that could be done.~~

No loss, only bruises. We are prison-
ers of war, and are being well cared for.

Very respectfully,

Commanding Chief Richmond Pearson Hobson,
~~U.S. Navy, U.S. Navy, U.S. Navy~~
~~North Atlantic Station~~ Asst. Naval Comdr., U.S.N.
~~U.S. Navy, U.S. Navy, U.S. Navy~~
off Santiago de Cuba -

REDUCED FACSIMILE OF THE FIRST DRAFT OF THE DESPATCH
TO ADMIRAL SAMPSON.

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

nication. The request, in fact, was a singular one to make, even of a generous enemy; but our reception and treatment had been exceedingly kind, and it was evident that, unless informed at once, the squadron would report us lost. When the letters were turned in, Captain Acosta placed his state-room at my service, showed me photographs of his family, and told me to make myself at home, insisting that I must be tired, and should lie down in his bunk while he went out to attend to duties. Evidently we were to be treated kindly as prisoners of war, and would have some chance of being exchanged,—if no chance of escape should occur beforehand,—and should then have further opportunity for action.

Left alone, my first thought was naturally of home. Then my mind began to go over the situation—the condition of the defenses, and the effect of the sinking of the *Merrimac*. Probably the Spanish fleet could get by her, one at a time; but it would be a delicate and difficult operation for a large ship, especially at night. They could not stop or anchor, or make any formation at the enlargement of the channel, or utilize the two bights extending to the right and left. Ah, they were talking about this very subject in the ward-room! An officer had evidently come on board, and the conversation had become animated, so that words and even whole sentences could be heard: "But he

IMPRISONMENT IN MORRO CASTLE

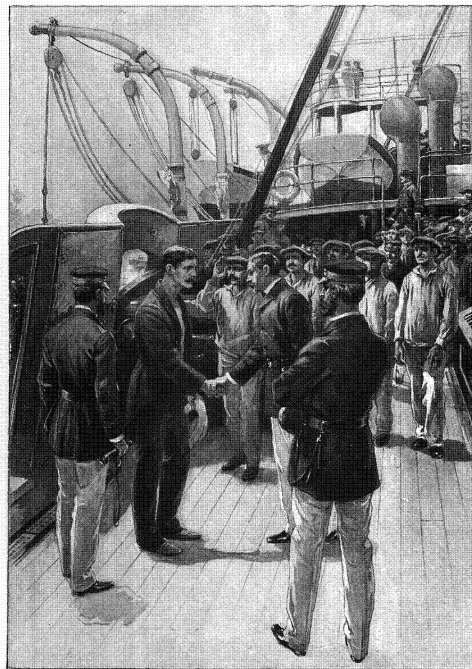
says positively that the channel is blocked"; and, as far as I could gather, the statement appeared to be quoted from an army engineer sent to investigate. My heart leaped. Could it be, after all, that the channel was completely blocked? But sober thought again reasoned: "No. They may think so for a while—may continue to be in doubt. The difficulties and disadvantages imposed may cause hesitation and delay, and may permit of further preparation on our part; but when it becomes necessary, pilots can surely take their fleet out by daylight, one at a time." Again and again I reviewed the situation; but each time the inevitable conclusion came back that the blocking was incomplete. Hard and bitter was the thought, beyond the comfort of philosophy in its assurance that the human factor of the problem was complete, and that the element of incompleteness was beyond human control.

These thoughts had continued perhaps an hour, when Captain Acosta came in to say that an officer from General Linares had come down from the Morro, and that the prisoners were ordered to be taken to the castle. The captain said that he was very much distressed—that they had hoped to entertain us on the *Mercedes*, and he feared we might not fare so well.

We went into the cabin, and I was introduced to the officer. A formal conversation was kept up

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

for a short while, when another officer was announced, and I was introduced to Captain Bustamante, chief of staff of Admiral Cervera. I said that I had had the pleasure of meeting Captain Bustamante "in the launch this morning." To which the captain made a pleasant reply, and then stated that it was his duty to inform me that Lieutenant-General Linares, commanding the department, had taken the prisoners from the hands of the navy and had ordered them to be transferred to the Morro, and that the launch was waiting to take us. We found my men already at the gangway. In going out, it was discovered that no hat had been provided for me, and the nearest officer, the navigator, charged back to get one, which was a straw hat of the American type. I had the pleasure of entertaining this officer afterward on the *New York*, two days after the surrender. My men all had on dry clothing,—Spanish sailor uniforms,—their wounds had been dressed, and a good breakfast had been served to them. There was something touching in the good-bys at the gangway, the Spanish officers expressing repeated regrets that we should be taken away to the Morro. When I was thanking them for the kind treatment received on board, Charette stepped out, and requested me, for the men, to express their thanks and appreciation. The Spanish officers and sailors seemed surprised to see such thoughtful courtesy



THE AMERICAN PRISONERS LEAVING THE "REINA MERCEDES."
Charette (seen in the background) requesting Mr. Hobson to return the thanks
of the crew for kind treatment.

IMPRISONMENT IN MORRO CASTLE

in the seamen; in fact, the admirable conduct and bearing of the men throughout the term of imprisonment was a continued source of surprise to the Spaniards, officers speaking to me from time to time about these remarkable men. I assured them that the men were simply types of the American seaman.

Captain Acosta shook hands, and said he would come up to see me in the Morro and bring some reading-matter, and begged that I would call upon him in case he could be of service. These kind purposes were not destined to be fulfilled, for, alas! I was not to see the gallant captain again.

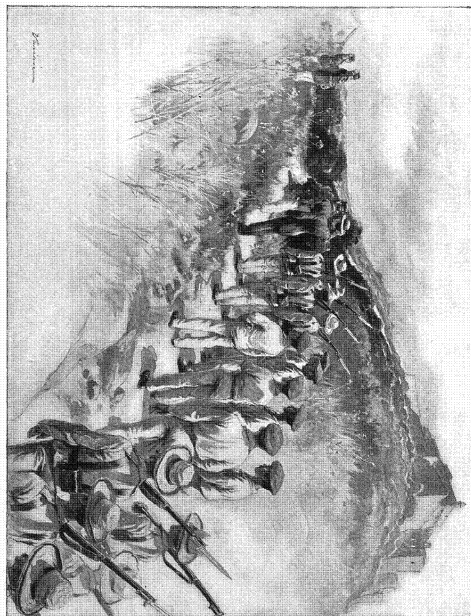
A guard followed us into the launch, and we stood across the entrance, passing only a short distance from the *Merrimac*. Looking at her, the conclusion was inevitable that the channel was not completely blocked, and I felt again the sting of bitter disappointment. We rounded Estrella Point, stood into the cove, and, landing at the small wharf, climbed the steep height approaching Morro from the rear. We climbed slowly, Captain Bustamante stopping to catch breath, and gained a height from which stretched out the entrance and Socapa, Estrella, Churruca, Punta Gorda, Smith Cay, and the opening of the bay beyond, where lay the vessels that meant so much. We pushed on, and there, close at hand, had a full view of Morro from the north—the walls all black from the weather of ages,

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

a very type of the medieval castle that had so interested me when I was in Europe, telling so much dark history, and hiding so much more. Why were we going in there? Were we not to be treated as prisoners of war?

On top, a short distance off the path, stood an officer in frock-coat and white trousers, looking at us as we came up. The captain confirmed my impression that it was Admiral Cervera, and verified my identification of him as the officer who had assisted me into the launch in the morning; and the young officer who had been with him in the launch proved to be his son. The admiral must have dressed hurriedly in the morning, for in the launch I had not noticed any insignia of his rank. As we passed, I saluted, with the captain, and the admiral returned the salute.

We crossed the bridge over the moat, passed the portcullis, and entered a vaulted passage, where an officer and guard were waiting. Captain Bustamante spoke to the officer, apparently the adjutant—a thick-set man, low, heavy, with long black beard and raven eyes, apparently the man for the place. The men were conducted on through, and the jailer, with a ring of massive keys, led me to the left under an arched entrance into the guard-room. There were two chairs and a table. The jailer made a motion to a chair, and we sat down. He was a remarkable man,—probably six feet two, all bone



MOUNTING TO THE MORRO.

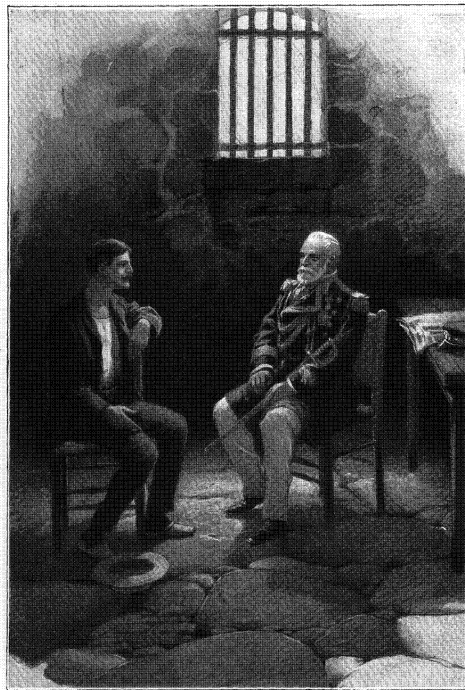
IMPRISONMENT IN MORRO CASTLE

and muscle, aquiline features, a face with a hard, set expression, that seemed never to have been disturbed by the passing of an emotion,—the man to carry out orders to the letter, whatever their nature. We sat on in silence for a few minutes, when Admiral Cervera entered, and we rose, and the jailer withdrew without a word. The admiral advanced with outstretched hand and with an inquiry as to my welfare, the greeting of a charming gentleman and gallant officer. I felt at home with him at once. We sat down, and he went on to say that he had received my note inclosing the report to the commander-in-chief of the American forces, and that he had been particularly desirous to deliver it; but being a communication with the enemy, it was necessary to refer the matter to General Linares, who, as a lieutenant-general, was his senior, and that General Linares had refused to let the report be delivered. However, a flag of truce would be taken out, and the American admiral would be informed of our escape and safety. The conversation, carried on in French, then became more or less general, only a reference being made to the *Mer-rimac*, the admiral inquiring as to her size, but carefully avoiding embarrassing questions. He spoke of American officers whom he had met, and inquired particularly about Admiral Luce, whom he had seen in Spain in connection with the Columbian celebration. I referred to the report that he

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

had had service in the United States, mentioning that I had understood he had been on duty in Washington as naval attaché to the Spanish legation. He replied that this was a mistake, that the attaché belonged to another family. During my two years' cruise as midshipman I had visited a number of ports in Spain; and later, while on duty in Paris, on a mission to the French shipyards, I had taken occasion, en route from Bordeaux to Toulon, to cross the Pyrenees into Spain. He knew all the places I had visited, and conversation continued in the pleasantest vein for probably ten minutes. The admiral left with the salutations and the courteous manner that would have marked a visit to a friendly admiral on his flagship. "Ah," I thought, "this admiral commanding the Spanish naval forces has taken the pains to put on the uniform for official visits, and has come at the very earliest moment to visit a young lieutenant of the enemy in prison! Surely chivalry is not yet dead."

As the admiral left, the jailer reëntered, and led the way out of the room through the passageway to the rear, down a flight of steps, across a sort of court, then up another flight of stairs, stopping before the door of the highest cell, which occupied the top of the southwest angle of the castle, a sentry having followed us. The door faces to the southward and eastward, from a commanding position, and while the jailer was adjusting the heavy key and



ADMIRAL CERVERA VISITING MR. HOBSON IN THE GUARD-ROOM
AT MORRO CASTLE.

IMPRISONMENT IN MORRO CASTLE

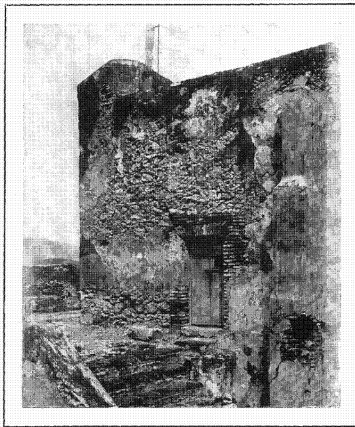
throwing back the bolts, I gazed out over the sea. There lay our vessels,—I recognized them all,—slowly moving back and forth in two columns. What a sight!—the power of a great nation concentrating with determined purpose; history calling; the eternal rule of justice appealing; the God of war impelling. A heavy blow was about to fall for liberty and the sacred cause of human right. It was a great sociological phenomenon, and the individual was not to be counted—was, indeed, happy in being lost.

The jailer threw open the door, and as we entered the barren and filthy cell, flies and insects started up. Then I perceived the word “Muerte” written on the wall. The last prisoner must have died there, and evidently the cell had not been cleaned since. The jailer withdrew, leaving the sentry at the door. An attendant brought in a box with four upright strips nailed at the corners for a table; but it would not stand, so he leaned it against the wall, and left. The sentry closed the door, locking and bolting it. This, then, was my cell, and that was its furniture. I walked up and down on the broken brick-and-mortar floor, and wondered where my men could be.

After a while the door opened, and Captain Bustamante entered. He must have been shocked at the situation, for his first word was an apology. He said that he was distressed, that such a condi-

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tion of things would not be allowed to continue, and that I must regard it as only temporary. I assured him that I should ask for no indulgence, but that he must perceive that the sanitary condition was utterly intolerable; that I must ask that the cell be cleaned and the door left open for light and ventilation; that my men be given clean cells; and that we be allowed means for keeping our cells and persons clean, as otherwise infection would be inevitable, with every probability of blood-poisoning through the wounds and scratches. He replied that he personally would look to the matter at once. He had come, he continued, to ask if there was anything he might do for me in connection with the flag of truce which he was about to take out to the fleet. I asked, if it would not be inconsistent with his duty, that, simply as a matter of personal satisfaction to me, he would mention to Admiral Sampson that the *Merrimac's* steering-gear had been shot away. He replied that he feared he should not be allowed to speak about the subject at all. I asked him then if he would be kind enough to make inquiry about a young colleague of mine who had come after the *Merrimac* in a steam-launch. I had been very anxious about Powell. I knew, of course, that he would not think of coming within the fire of the guns on the slope of Socapa, but as the picket-boat was not far from the position where he was to lie, I feared lest the launch, which carried only rifles, might have



MR. HOBSON'S CELL IN MORRO CASTLE.
The mark of a shell fired during the bombardment of June 6
is seen to the right of the door-sill.

IMPRISONMENT IN MORRO CASTLE

fallen in with her. He said he could already reassure me on the subject, as no word had come in that the launch had been injured. I asked Captain Bustamante if he would be kind enough to have the surgeon directed to give careful and constant attention to the wounded men, and to allow one of the crew, Charette or Montague, to come in to receive instructions as to details in taking care of their health in confinement.

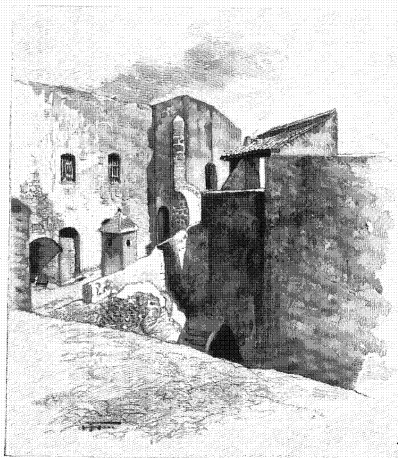
Soon after the captain left, directions for the door to be left open during the daytime were issued by the authorities, and in a few minutes Charette was sent in. He had his usual cheerful look, unperturbed by the sight of the men's wretched cell and by the uncertainties of our confinement. He referred to the heavy situation we had passed through, and said, "Every man would do it again to-night, sir." Indeed, throughout the whole term of imprisonment the men showed the most remarkable spirit of cheerfulness. They never had the support of kind words and courteous visits, as I did; yet never once did they exhibit signs of anxiety or fear. The Spanish soldiers at first taunted them as they would Cuban prisoners; called them desperados; accused them of fighting for money, and made signs of dealing out coin; and passed their fingers across their throats and shook their heads, to indicate the fate that awaited the crew. My men only smiled at such taunts, and they actually

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laughed at the gruesome mockings. It seems that the impression was more or less general, at first, that the men were not Americans, but a hired gang of desperados.

Several days later one of the officers spoke in a similar strain, whereupon I asked him what he meant. He replied: "For instance, two of your men are deserters from the Spanish army, and that man Charette is a Catalonian from the northeastern part of Spain; one of your men is a Swede; another is a German." I told him he was never more mistaken in his life—that the men were all American citizens, regularly enlisted and serving in the American navy, and that, so far from its being necessary to get desperate men for the work, virtually the whole fleet had volunteered for it, and had pleaded to be allowed to go. This it seemed impossible for him to understand.

Charette had not been gone long when, to my surprise, men began bringing in furniture,—a table, a wash-stand, a pitcher, a basin, a cot with a good double blanket, and several chairs (one of them a rocker),—while at the same time a hammock and a blanket were taken to each man. This proved to be the first of a long series of thoughtful kindnesses from Frederick W. Ramsden, Esq., British consul at Santiago—kindnesses that contributed in the most essential manner to the health and comfort of the American prisoners. His thoughtfulness had



VIEW INSIDE MORRO CASTLE, FROM THE STAIRS MOUNTING
TO MR. HOBSON'S CELL.

The cell of the crew is shown opposite the sentry box and directly under the barred window to the left, which is in the room used as an operating room for the Spanish wounded. The sloping roof is on the kitchen where the Spanish soldiers reported for rations.

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been so prompt that these articles had come down all the way from Santiago city before we had been an hour in the Morro. After the arrival of the furniture, the situation, with my door open, looking out over the sea, was actually cheerful.

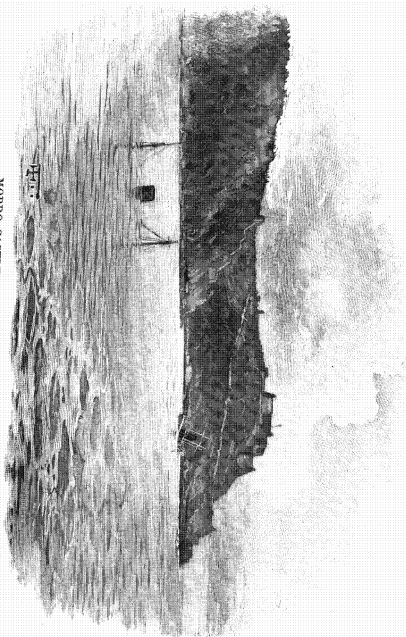
It was not long before the governor of the Morro came, making me a most cordial visit. He was followed by the colonel commanding the artillery. This officer, after kind salutations, referred to the heavy fire we had withstood so long, and to the gallantry of our fire in return. When I informed him that we had no guns on board, he was utterly incredulous, and seemed to conclude that I was deceiving him, for he replied: "But I know you must have fired, for I myself was struck on the foot, though I was standing away up above." I replied that it must have been a fragment resulting from their own fire; at which the colonel became serious, as though a new and unwelcome thought was passing through his mind. He too had taken us for an armored vessel forcing our way through, and what he said about our fire puzzled me. The next time Charette came in, he told me that wounded men were being operated on in the room just above the men's cell, and that the blood was running down the wall, and had run down the clues of his hammock, so that he had had to change its position. When I had a chance to speak to him and to the others afterward, they said that both a

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Spanish sergeant and a Spanish private had told them that the blood came from the men we had wounded—that we had killed fourteen and wounded thirty-seven!

In a visit to the Morro after the surrender, I was very much puzzled to find fresh gashes and imprints of various sizes in the rear walls, as though it had been attacked from the inshore side, while we had attacked only from the sea. Every indication seems to point to the conclusion that the Spaniards firing at the *Merrimac* had struck their own men across the channel. This was the more to be expected from the horizontal fire. Morro, though elevated, was in the line of fire from the *Reina Mercedes*, whose projectiles, exploding on the *Merrimac*, doubtless showered the banks and the rear of Morro beyond. No wonder, then, that they took us for an armored man-of-war.

My mind turned again to the *Merrimac*, and I realized with repeated pangs that she did not completely block the channel. The ground-tackle had exhibited extraordinary qualities of resistance, and with the slightest help of the helm to start the turning, it was evident that the vessel would have swung to her position athwart with mathematical precision. But at the last moment the steering-gear was destined to be shot away. The entire speed of the vessel had been absorbed by the elastic qualities of the anchor-gear. Even then, if the



MOHRO CASTLE, FROM THE SOCAPA SIDE.
 The wreck of the *Mermaid*, sunk June 3, 1886, is seen on the left with Eschscholtz's Island, Rastrelli Cove setting in
 between. The *Donna Mercedes*, seen on the right, was sunk in 1870. The *Donna Mercedes* was sunk in 1870.
 The sorts of Carrer's fleet, in a successful effort of the Spanish to block the channel.

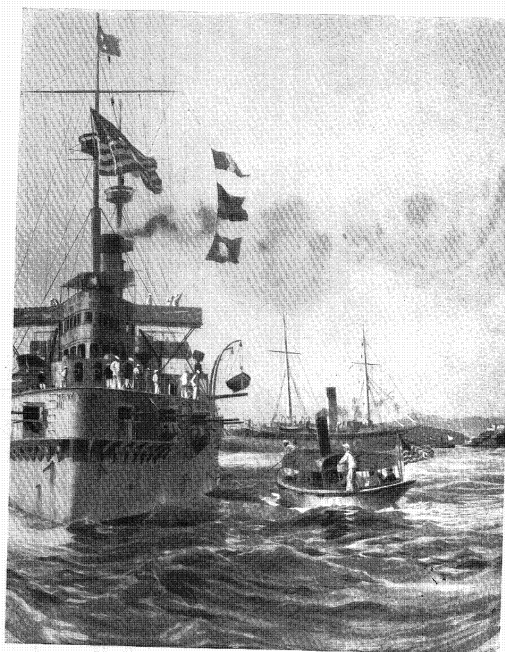
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stern-anchor had been retarded only a few seconds longer, its chain would have held the vessel secure. Alas! it had been dropped a moment too soon, and, as was learned later, not by the man stationed there, but by the explosion of one of the enemy's projectiles. Again, only two torpedoes out of the whole number had gone off, and these were the least effective of all; in fact, that part of the ship affected by torpedo No. 5 had already been flooded by the sea connections. This disabling of torpedoes had been due to the necessity of using batteries for their discharge instead of an electric machine. It was extraordinary that the mine had helped us but little, if at all. It seemed, by a hard fate, to have flooded the region that had already been twice flooded, by sea connections and by torpedo No. 5. Again, how extraordinary, after resting eight or ten minutes grounded on Estrella, to be wrenched off by the tide! One would indeed expect a vessel so grounded to resist strongly the efforts of her own engines and of tugs. Then, when I saw her begin to straighten out in the channel, if we had only had the war-heads we should have gone down like a shot. It seemed strange that the admiral had twice refused to let me take them, though he had allowed everything else that I had asked for. Then, again, if the vessel had hung on only a few minutes longer, till the accelerated sinking due to the submergence of the cargo-ports had set in, we

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scarcely should have been wrenched off before going down. But no; it seemed that we had to be wrenched off just soon enough to allow the vessel to drift down and straighten completely out. As I reviewed the experience, a flood of bitterness swept over me. These remarkable adverse coincidences could never happen again. As I saw the tug with a flag of truce going out to the fleet, I thought if I could only be exchanged quickly, or escape, the admiral would let me take in the other collier, with the same plans and arrangements, and the same crew. Another time I would guarantee complete blocking.

While I was thinking over the circumstances of our capture it struck me as singular that Admiral Cervera should have had a squad of riflemen in the steam-launch, since his reconnaissance involved only a poor old catamaran and the top of the funnel and the masts of a sunken vessel. Then it occurred to me that his precaution was a wise one, for otherwise we might have done a neat stroke of work. My men included a machinist, a fireman, and two cockswains, and the others were all determined fellows. Our loaded revolvers with waterproof cartridges were hidden under our life-preservers. How easy it would have been, under ordinary conditions, after getting on board the launch and untying the strings of our life-preservers, on a signal from me to throw them off, draw revolvers



STEAM-LAUNCH OF THE "NEW YORK" BRINGING CAPTAIN BUSTAMANTE
TO THE FLAGSHIP WITH A FLAG OF TRUCE, AND NEWS OF
THE SAFETY OF THE "MERRIMAC" PRISONERS.
The vessel beyond the launch is the *Vixen*. The Spanish tug is seen to the extreme right.

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and cover all the men on board, and quietly take possession! I could have covered the three officers sitting together aft; my men could have taken stations, and we should have had force enough to continue to cover the crew of the launch, or they could easily have been shoved over. We could then have proceeded out of the harbor to the *New York* in the Spanish admiral's launch, with himself and his staff as trophies of the adventure. The admiral's launch would not have been fired on by the guns at the entrance, and even if the destroyer close by had taken alarm, she could not have hoisted anchor until we should have been well away, and she could not have chased us outside without having been met by the fire of our fleet. This manœuvre would doubtless have suggested itself at the time, if it had not been for the formidable squad of riflemen.

A soldier coming in at this time with a pan of frijoles, or beans, my thoughts came back to my surroundings. The frijoles were followed by a pan of rice and bread. I had the table placed in front of the door, so that I might watch the ships while I was eating. Appetite was keen, and my first meal in prison was very much relished. The regular ration consisted of frijoles, rice, and bread, and, except the bread, continued to be served in full quantity till the end of our captivity. As a rule, a piece of sausage came with the frijoles. The



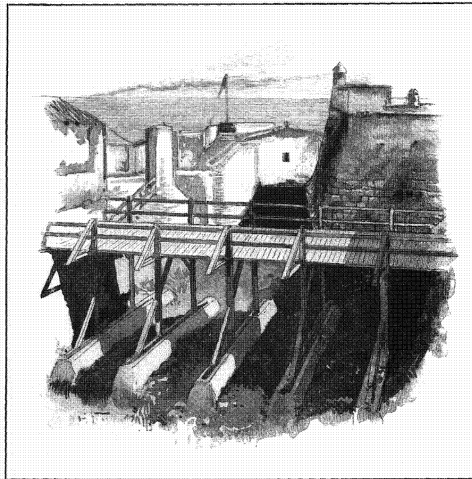
THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

cooking did not vary, both staples being invariably boiled without seasoning, and exactly the same food was served at every meal, until the system somewhat rebelled and after a while called strongly for variety; yet on the whole the food was nourishing. After the transfer to Santiago a ration of beef was added, and it was clear that the authorities were giving me the same food that was issued to the Spanish officers.

My men received the same ration of frijoles, rice, and bread, with a reduced ration of beef, while no beef at all was included in the ration of the Spanish soldier. Flour soon became scarce, and corn and a mixture of corn and rice were substituted. It was evident, however, that the Spaniards depended on bread more than we did, and felt more keenly its scarcity; so it can be said broadly that during the imprisonment the prisoners fared as well as their captors, if not better.

While I ate, the soldiers of the garrison lined up on the opposite side of the small court to receive their food, each one carrying his pan. One can imagine the interest with which I examined the Spanish soldiers, making mental comparisons with our own, and endeavoring to foresee the probable action and results when the two should be found facing each other, as I knew they would before many weeks. It was clear at a glance that they were from the peasant classes. Many of them were





OUTER PORTCULLIS, MORRO CASTLE.
*The *Marrinac* prisoners entered across this bridge from the left.*

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very young, and they averaged perhaps four or five inches less in height and at least twenty-five pounds less in weight than our men. They did not look to be in good health, having bad complexions, and many of them were coughing. It was clear that we heavily outclassed them physically. The most striking feature, however, was the completely passive expression of the face. They made little effort at conversation, and seldom smiled. For some time they had probably been working very hard on the emplacements for batteries, and there seemed no surplus energy for any other activity. The eye was usually dull, having a steady, stoical look, in some cases pathetic. In temperament they were clearly just the opposite of our own troops, who, recruited from a higher class, had the alert, animated look of aggressive men.

As luncheon was being completed, an orderly appeared with a tray bearing cigars, cigarettes, and a bottle of cognac, which he presented with the compliments of the governor of the Morro, delivering at the same time a note in French, with cautiously couched words of kindness to this effect:

SIR: The commandant of the fortress, and the officers of the engineers and of the artillery, have the honor to salute you, and to offer to do anything in their power to amelio-

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rate your situation. We therefore beg you to make known to us your wishes.

Accept, sir, the compliments of our highest esteem.

ANTONIO ROS,
The Governor.

There could not have been a more thoughtful token of kindness, hospitality, and good wishes, though, as it happened, I was not accustomed to using any of the articles offered.

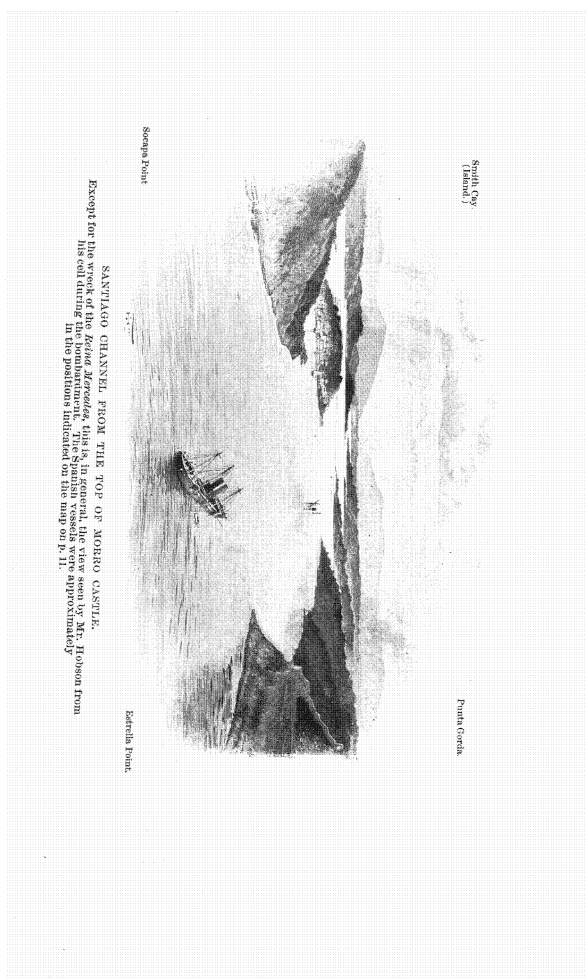
Having nothing to write with, I had to send my compliments and thanks by verbal message. When the orderly was gone, I sent the soldiers who were waiting on me to the crew with the cigars and cigarettes, keeping a few, however, together with the cognac; and these, singular as it appears, were used to offer the hospitality of the cell to the officers that called later. I was deeply touched by the calls which I continued to receive from officers during the afternoon and the following days. My visitors were of all grades, and many came from a distance. Officers, nearly all my seniors in age and rank, would beg, as they put it in warm and dignified words, to be allowed to shake my hand. There can be no question that the Spanish character is deeply sensible to a genuine sentiment. The history of warfare probably contains no instance of chivalry on the part of captors greater than that of those who fired on the *Merrimac*, and I knew that harshness of treatment could have had its origin only in official considerations.

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The afternoon passed quickly. In the intervals between visits I would walk up and down, or sit in the doorway and look out over the sea at our fleet, which, with its stately movements, presented constantly changing positions in constantly changing effects of light. I also noticed the vultures that sailed about close at hand, turning their uncanny heads as if investigating, and the graceful boatswain birds with long, marlinespike body and keenly tapered bow wings. At five, dinner or supper was served, with the same food, the soldiers lining up as for luncheon. The sun sank; the vessels stood to their night positions; the sentry closed the door, shoved the bolt, and turned the key. A shaft of light still came in through the small barred window high up in the wall on the west side, the only opening besides the door. I walked up and down in the darkness till the lampman came in with a lamp. I turned it low, screening it, and continued walking till about nine, when I moved the cot beneath the window, as if preparing to sleep, and lay down. When I was sure the sentry would believe me asleep, I stepped on the cot, and drew myself up to investigate the window. What a sight greeted me! The view was down a sheer height of perhaps two hundred and fifty feet upon the entrance, and stretching out to the westward and northwestward under the full moon lay a tragic panorama, weird in the stillness, with the mountains

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in the distance, and Socapa just across, showing the glint of guns in its batteries on top and on the slopes. There lay the picket-boat again, just outside the entrance. Farther in, the bow of the *Reina Mercedes* stood out clear behind Socapa; and beyond her, in the bight to the left near Smith Cay, lay a destroyer, seemingly looking at the sunken *Merrimac* just ahead. So, then, they had a destroyer on each side of the channel, up the bight to the left as well as to the right! Beyond Smith Cay lay the black and sullen hull of the *Viscaya*, with her broadside to the opening channel. The masts of her two sister ships, the *Maria Teresa* and the *Almirante Oquendo*, and those of the *Colón* beyond Punta Gorda showed that they too would bear upon a vessel passing into the inner harbor. Excepting the battery to the eastward of Morro, the panorama included all the defenses of the channel. How remarkably this entrance lends itself to defense, and how cleverly the Spaniards had availed themselves of its natural advantages! Since luncheon I had been thinking about the defenses and their bearing upon the prosecution of the war. I had heard Admiral Sampson and Captain Chadwick refer to the selection of a point for landing troops, and wondered if it were intended to try to take the city and attack the enemy's ships from the land. The more I thought on the subject, the more futile such an attempt seemed. How could



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the city be occupied under the guns of the enemy's ships? How could land artillery of sufficient caliber to outclass the armor of the Spanish vessels ever be placed in position under the fire of their guns? How could such artillery even be landed and transported under existing conditions? The conclusion grew stronger that land operations against the ships and the army of occupation would probably cost thousands of lives; that the ships should be captured or destroyed and the city taken by our vessels, the army's best function being simply to cut off escape inland and to occupy the place after surrender. Steadily this conclusion engendered a profound conviction that if the enemy should not come out we should go in. I determined to make every possible endeavor to get back to the fleet with my knowledge of the defenses. Escape from the cell was impossible. I should have to await further developments. My mind turned again upon the *Merrimac*. How fortunate, it seemed to me now, that she did not go down athwart the channel! Our entrance for the rest of the war would have been impossible. She could not be better situated. The enemy would hesitate a long time before trying to pass, thus allowing time for our whole fleet to arrive. Their ships could not form in the enlargement of the channel, or even across it, but would have to pass single file, and would be at great risk if they tried to pass at night. Heaven had not

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frowned upon our efforts, after all. The series of coincidences that had kept us from going down athwart were only the steady guidance of a kindly fate. I went to sleep with a thankful mind.

I slept soundly, having had no sleep for about sixty-three hours, and only about six hours during the previous eighty-seven. As deep as the sleep was, however, it was interrupted during the night, as I became aware of efforts being made to pry me off the cot, as it were, and I suddenly recognized that a huge insect was using its body for a wedge or crowbar. I recognized in the dark a species of big spider that I had seen in the afternoon—something of a cross between a spider and a crab, with a round, black body and a multitude of red legs. Naturally I took measures to get rid of such a bed-fellow, but I knew that the tribe was too hopelessly numerous for extermination. Old Morro seems to be their breeding-ground; I have not found them elsewhere, and I believe they are not poisonous.

I was still asleep when the soldier came in to bring breakfast—coffee and bread. I asked him if there was anything else. He answered, "No, señor," in a half-injured tone of surprise, as if to say, "What do you expect? Who ever heard of anybody having anything else?"

Early in the forenoon Captain Bustamante came. He said that he had taken out the flag of truce with information that we were well, and had brought

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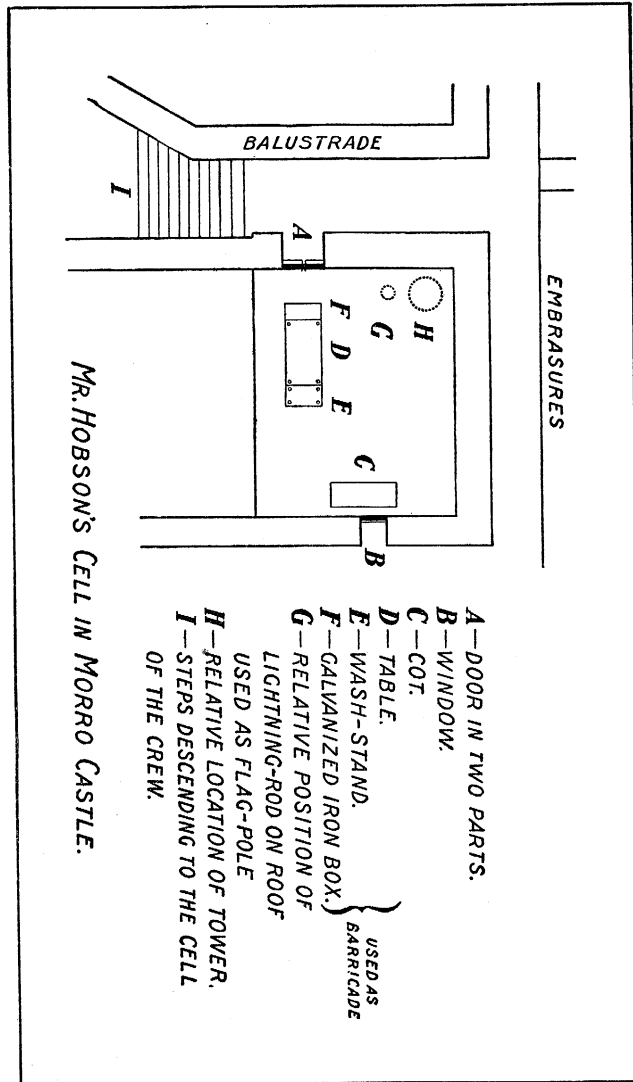
back a box for me, and the men's bags, and twenty-five dollars in gold,—all from the *New York*,—with a memorandum from Flag-Lieutenant Staunton, with whom he had communicated. He then said there was a matter which he hoped I would pardon him for referring to: he trusted I would not consider him impertinent in asking about the torpedoes on the *Merrimac*, to which I had referred while on the *Reina Mercedes*, since it was a question of humanity. He wished to know about them for the guidance of divers, whose destruction could not affect the issue of war. I had decided that it would be best to give out no further information about the *Merrimac*, in order to keep the Spaniards guessing, and to have them keep clear of the vessel and hesitate to take measures to blow her out of the channel. I thereupon told the captain that it would distress me to think that harmless divers should suffer, and as a matter of humanity I would tell him that there *were* torpedoes on the vessel, but as to their location or arrangement, or any other features, he must excuse me from giving information. He was most courteous, and apologized for having ventured the question, reiterating that he asked only for humanity's sake and because I had voluntarily made reference to the subject on the *Mercedes*.

Referring to the matter of our having been put in the Morro by order of General Linares, he said

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he had seen the general, and during the conversation the general said he would not visit me, because he feared that if he came he should not be able to bring himself to do his official duty. I wondered what he meant by his official duty. I have never been able to clear this matter up with any satisfaction. Mr. Ramsden told me, during his first visit (without any reference to the matter on my part), that the general had said the same thing to him. The general kept his word: although he sent a courteous message of greeting by Mr. Ramsden at this visit, he never called, and only sent his chief of staff on the day before our exchange. I do not know whether he changed his interpretation of his official duty.

Before the captain left, the box and bags came. The box was one of my galvanized-iron carling boxes; the bags were the regular bags of the men from the *New York* and the *Iowa*, with special bags made up from the stores of the *New York* for the others, all carefully prepared and marked. Charette and Montague were sent for, and came and examined the bags; and we made a list of the articles needed and not kept in the bags, such as pipes, tooth-brushes, etc. The captain took the list, and the articles came by the next courier from Santiago, being paid for upon delivery. I asked the captain if it could not be arranged to allow my men to wash their clothes, and to allow one of them



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to come in to see me every day to make known their needs and give account of the wounded men. Both concessions were granted by the governor of the Morro.

Charette and Montague were still with me when the captain left. The sight of the bags seemed to make them as happy as children, and while getting the bags together they talked about the marvelous escape in coming in, and spoke in a touching way of having been "brought through." One can scarcely imagine the exquisite joy the box and bags brought us, coming direct from our friends and comrades, who, though within sight, seemed impassably separated. It was like receiving a cablegram from a dear one across the sea—some message which, in spite of the vast gulf of separation, still holds, as it were, the warmth and breadth of kindness and affection. When the men were gone I opened my box, and found its contents most carefully and thoughtfully prepared. The books, plans, and articles which I had left in it had been taken out, and in their stead were a service-dress uniform, a white uniform and extra trousers, and other apparel, with a shaving outfit and other toilet articles complete. It was touching to see that where my own things could not be found my mess-mates had sent theirs. One of them who sat near me at table had recently passed a birthday, and his wife had sent him as a present a fine new outfit of

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carefully chosen underwear, the very thing for the climate. He had taken me into his state-room and had shown the articles to me with pride and enthusiasm, and I saw how much he prized them as coming from her. There they were in my box!

I shifted into uniform at once—blue blouse and white trousers; and this uniform I wore throughout. I returned the clothing of Captain Acosta, with a message of compliments and thanks, the messenger bringing back from him a kindly note of acknowledgment, together with the garments I had left behind. The men's borrowed articles were similarly returned and their discarded ones brought back, from which they vainly tried to wash out the coal-dust and oil.

The forenoon of Saturday (June 4) passed without incident. The surgeon came after making his rounds, and reported the men's wounds as healing rapidly. About two o'clock in the afternoon, while I was seated in the rocker just inside the door, gazing out over the fleet, an official with a stern look appeared, and, as I made a movement to rise, with an expression of hauteur waved his hand and said I need not rise. I rose, however, and offered him a chair, which he declined. He was followed by another august-looking official, whose mouth seemed hermetically sealed, and who carried paper, pen, and ink, and he in turn by a third, who addressed me in English. "That official," said he,

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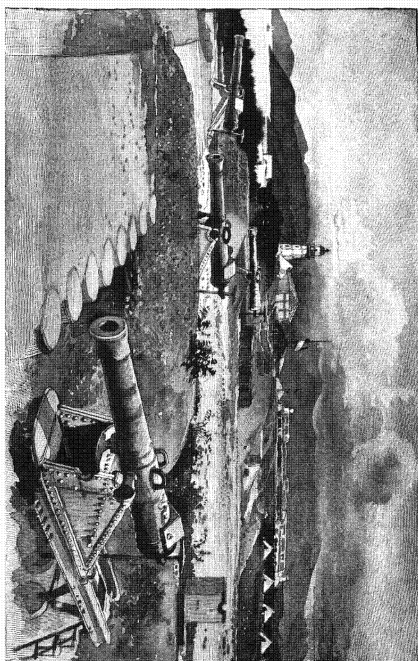
pointing to the first—"that official is the *juez de instruccion*—the judge of instruction"; and he paused as if to see the effect of the announcement. "This is the *secretario*, and I am the official interpreter." "I am sure I am happy to meet you, gentlemen. Will you not be kind enough to take seats?" I replied, placing chairs to the front. The secretary took his chair, set it alongside the table, and arranged his paper and ink without a word; and the judge and the interpreter finally taking chairs, we all sat down, and I waited for them to take the initiative. The judge spoke to the interpreter, who, turning to me, said that the judge had come to examine me, and gave me fair warning to make my answers full and accurate. I said that I did not doubt that the proceeding was entirely regular, but that I should be indebted if, before the questions began, he would be kind enough to explain to me under whose orders they came and what was the object and nature of the questions. He answered that they came under the orders of the commander of the port, and would question me as to the vessel that had come in on Friday morning. I asked who the commander of the port was, and from whom he received his authority. He replied that the commander of the port was the officer charged with all the affairs of the harbor, and that he received his authority from the captain-general, the captain-general receiving his au-

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thority from the government at Madrid. I asked them if Admiral Cervera, who had captured me, and the British consul, who was charged with the business of my government, knew of the proceeding. The judge, who had shown signs of irritation, then burst out at me direct. He did not know whether Admiral Cervera and the British consul knew of the matter, and he did not care; he did not intend to have his authority questioned; he came to ask questions, not to be questioned; he had never seen such a prisoner—and he rose to his feet in wrath. I rose at the same time, and faced him, and told him he should have intelligence enough to know, and those who sent him should have intelligence enough to know, that the men who brought the *Merrimac* in could not be intimidated or coerced into answering unauthorized or impertinent questions. He said he would return and report that I refused to answer his questions. I replied that he did not seem to recognize that he had asked no questions. The defiance seemed to cool him off, and I suggested that he ask his questions, and I would tell him in each case whether I declined to answer or not; that I was sure it would only give me pleasure to answer those that were proper. He came over and sat near the secretary, and began, the secretary copying the questions word for word, the interpreter translating word for word: “What is your name?” “What is your rank and occupa-

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

tion?" "How old are you?" "Where were you born?" "Where have you lived?" "Are you single or married?" etc. I answered each question in turn, the interpreter translating my answers word for word, while the secretary wrote them down. When the identification questions were over, the next question was as follows: "What was the object of the vessel coming into the harbor on Friday morning, the 3d of June, and under whose authority were you acting?" I answered that the vessel came in under the authority of the commander-in-chief of the United States forces off Santiago de Cuba, and then asked for paper and pencil, and drafted the following additional answer: "Without in the slightest manner questioning the authority and the regularity of this interrogation, I must respectfully decline to answer in any way the first part of the question given until I have been informed by Admiral Cervera, by whose forces I was captured, and also by the English consul, who has been named to transact the business of the United States in the city of Santiago de Cuba, that they have been informed of this interrogation and of the nature of the question itself"; and then I added the request that my men also be not subjected to questioning till after the receipt of such information. I superintended the translation into Spanish as the secretary took it down from the interpreter. While withholding the information, the answer



BATTERY TO THE EASTWARD OF MORRO CASTLE, INCLUDING
OLD GUNS (1748-50).

IMPRISONMENT IN MORRO CASTLE

would make it difficult for the judge to make out a case of defiance of any legitimate authority.

The judge, in the meanwhile, had entirely changed his attitude. He ceased asking questions, and began a pleasant conversation, saying that he lived under the same roof as the British consul, who was a capital fellow. He rose, and we walked up and down, conversing. He said that he put aside his official capacity, and asked if I had any objection to telling him personally if the vessel had come in without a pilot. I answered that it had. The difficulties of navigation seemed to strike him most. He had not seen the firing. "Will you not shake hands, as man to man?" he asked; and I gave him a hearty clasp. "I too am a naval officer," he added, "and have been detailed to this duty."

When the secretary was through writing, he also unbent, and the interpreter joined in, and on leaving the three were full of kind words.¹

The interrogation was never taken up again, though General Linares seemed to have been displeased with the result of it, for the next day he caused Admiral Cervera and the British consul each to write me an official letter, informing me that he was in supreme command at Santiago, and

¹ The judge proved to be Lieutenant José Müller y Tejeiro, second in command of the Spanish naval forces of the province of Santiago; the secretary was Lieutenant Dario Laguna.

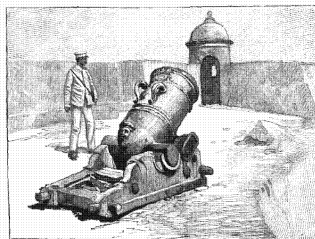
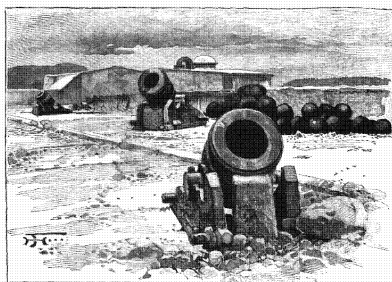
THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

that he had the complete direction of the matter of the prisoners.

The judge did not go to the men's cell, but various persons asked them questions, Charette, who speaks French, being called up as spokesman. In one case a major, with imperious air and stern voice of command, asked what was the object of our coming in. Charette drew himself up, and said in a firm voice: "In the American navy it is not the custom for a seaman to know, or to ask to know, the object of his superior officer." The major was so much impressed that he stopped asking questions and offered Charette a cigar.

The day passed without further incident, excepting visits of courtesy from officers, as on the previous day. Having occasion to cross the courtyard, I took new observation as to the chances of escape; but it was as hopeless as in the cell, for a sentry accompanied me and the guards occupied the entrance, while on all the other sides the walls went down to great depths. When I would pass near my men's cell, they would look out at me through the barred door. As I went by, the soldiers sitting near would rise and salute with as much respect as for their own officers, if not more; they had probably been impressed by the visits paid to me. With the strict watch kept, it was evident that there could be but little, if any, hope of escape.

Sunday (June 5) passed like Saturday.



MORTARS ON TOP OF MORRO.

IMPRISONMENT IN MORRO CASTLE

Monday morning, June 6, came in overcast. Early coffee had been served, and I was sitting back from the door, when, with a whizz and a crash, came the sharp crack of an exploding shell, followed by the vibrating peal of the eight-inch gun from which it was fired. Another whizz and crash and crack and peal, another and another, and then came the king of projectiles, a thirteen-inch, the air screeching and crackling as if vitrified.

I knew at once that a general bombardment had begun, and hastily examined the cell as to its protective features. The brick and mortar of the walls and the debris of the roof were more to be feared than the projectiles and their actual fragments.

At the first shot the sentry, as if he had been previously instructed, quickly closed the door, bolted and locked it, and ran away. I concluded that the splinters from the door would be preferable to the brick and mortar from the wall. I pulled the table and the wash-stand in front of the door, end on, and stood the galvanized-iron box up on its side against the front end of the table, a little back from the door, to catch any splinters from it; then I crawled through the legs of the table, and lay face down, with my head just behind the box in the direction of the firing. The table and wash-stand together were long enough to cover my head, body, and part of my legs from falling debris, and the box

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

screened the door. The principal danger was from blows of brick and mortar which might be hurled obliquely by entering projectiles, and from the whole cell or wall beneath being blown out by a thirteen-inch projectile and falling and crumbling down the precipice.

My men, I knew, were less exposed, being farther back and down. The situation was simple, and nothing remained but to await developments.

I knew what good marksmen our gunners were, and did not doubt that they would make quick work of the exposed parts of the Morro. The thought was scarcely formulated when a shock came that made the great mass tremble to its foundation. A heavy projectile had struck the wall facing the sea, and, penetrating, had exploded. While the pile still vibrated, a sea swell swept into the caverns below, and sent up a great, hollow, hungry roar.

A flood of bitter thoughts passed over me: "This, then, is the Spanish idea of honorable warfare—to place us here, and make our own men the executioners!" Then I began to study the phenomena with intense interest, locating by sound the vessels and the targets at which they were firing. It soon became evident that the batteries to the eastward and westward of the entrance were the principal targets, and that they returned the fire, though there appeared to be another target farther



MR. HOBSON LOOKING OUT OF THE CELL WINDOW DURING THE
BOMBARDMENT.

IMPRISONMENT IN MORRO CASTLE

to the eastward. From time to time the Morro itself would receive a shell; but it was not a principal target, and I concluded finally that the Morro, which did not answer the fire, would not be attacked till after the batteries were silenced, and therefore decided that I would be justified in getting out from under the table to examine the phenomena from the window—to return as soon as the Morro should become a target; so I came out, placed the cot into position, drew myself up, and looked out.

What sublimity of sight and sound! Our projectiles seemed like animated creatures in a wild chase, seething and screaming with rage, tearing to fragments everything they could touch in their mad flight, and keeping up a cloud of dust and gas about the battery. The thirteen-inch projectile seemed to have a dignity all its own, as though aware of its mighty power. Exploding, it would raise a great yellow cloud of earth and debris, sending forked shafts of gas out and up for a hundred feet, while for many seconds afterward the fragments would continue to drop about the Morro and in the water of the entrance. The first panoramic glance showed that the enemy was not replying, while it showed that the *Reina Mercedes* was on fire.

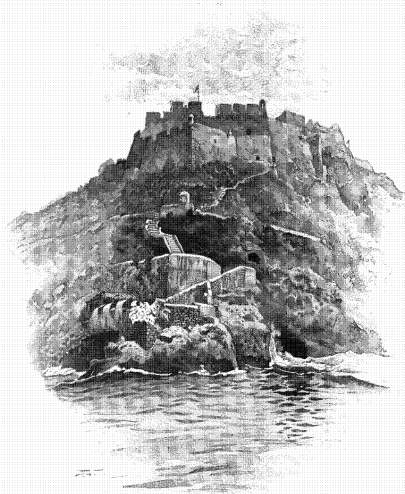
But I had scarcely begun the study of particulars when a projectile whizzed overhead, and another struck the Morro with full force. "They have be-

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

gun on the Morro," I thought, and jumped down and crawled under the table. The fire seemed to slacken for a moment; then the enemy opened, and again the fire set in strong against the Socapa sea battery, and I came out, and climbed to the window once more, in time to see the crews of the enemy's guns leave them and run to a pit in the rear. Then I watched for the next lull. Sure enough, up they came again, and fired away. Then our guns reopened in full force, and again the crews retreated to the pit.

This occurred over and over; and then I realized, even more than in the bombardment of San Juan, that ships cannot destroy shore batteries without coming into machine-gun range. It is necessary actually to strike the gun itself in order to put it out of action. I saw some of our shells literally bury guns with dirt and yet do virtually no injury. Our marksmanship was excellent,—splendid line shots, that tore up the shrubs and earth along the whole front of the battery,—but I did not see a single gun disabled, and every time we would slacken, the Spaniards would come up and fire away. I understood how they could thus make the vaunted "last shot."

While absorbed in watching the Socapa southwest battery, a projectile struck the roof just over my head, exploded, and carried a pile of brick and mortar along, dropping it into the water. Once



MORRO CASTLE FROM THE SOUTHWEST.
Mr. Hobson's cell was directly under the flag on the left. The flag
on the extreme right is at the eastern battery.

IMPRISONMENT IN MORRO CASTLE

more I took to the table, only to come forth again after a few moments' reassurance, stopping this time to look through the small barred window of the door. The ships, however, were too close in to be seen, and there were only two men in the courtyard, down by the door of the cell of my men. I climbed up again, and became absorbed in the firing. I saw one projectile explode on the bow of the *Reina Mercedes*, which was already on fire. I wondered at the time if Captain Acosta were there, as he had told me it was his special station. Another struck far over across Smith Cay, just in front of the *Vizcaya*. Another struck just in front of the *Merrimac's* foremast, close by a boat at the middle of a boom made up of spars and chains, which the enemy had constructed from Smith Cay to Churruca Point as an obstruction.¹ Several, one of them a thirteen-inch, hit Churruca Point, which was apparently mistaken by our gunner for Punta Gorda. Many continued to pass over my cell, and I wondered if our ships were trying high-angle fire over the Morro into the harbor beyond. Finally one struck apparently in the cell next beyond mine on the same level, and for the third time I took to my barricade. This was the last

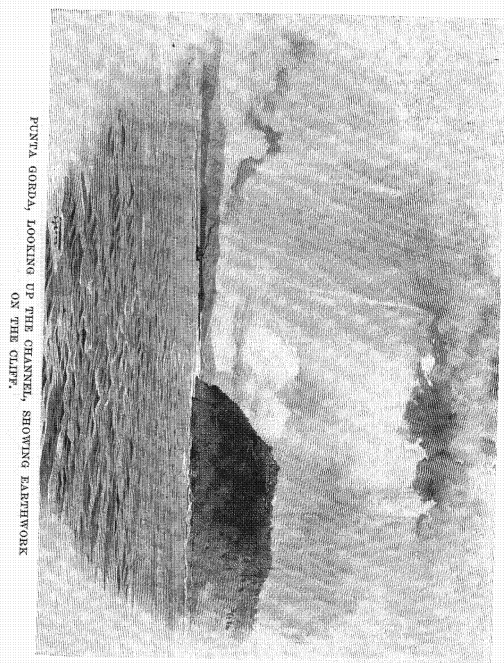
¹ This boom was just above the breaking joint. I had first noticed sunken *Merrimac*, and was com- it on the morning of our adventure posed of two lines of spars and from the catamaran soon after chains—the spars end on and dawn.

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

time, however, for I felt that it was important to make full observation of the enemy's defenses, as it would probably be the only chance by daylight, and that I would be justified in remaining at the window until it was clearly demonstrated that the fleet had turned full on the Morro.

While looking this time, I saw men come out from beyond Socapa, near the *Reina Mercedes*, and run along the path near the water to the batteries on the slopes. These were so effectually concealed that only when the men came out was I able to locate the pieces. Probably these were reserved for vessels that might attempt to run in, and it was because they did not wish our vessels to find their locations that they did not fire out of the entrance—even those that could. There must have been a false alarm of a vessel starting in, for the men came running along the path. Then one of our vessels must have discovered them, for soon there was a burst of shrapnel, sweeping the shoreline, and before many minutes the men ran back more rapidly than they came out.

The bombardment continued thus for about three hours, and afforded me ample time to impress on my memory the exact location of all the guns and an exact picture of the surrounding topography; and instinctively I began to evolve plans for taking the western side of the entrance, landing in the direction of Cabañas, advancing and placing artil-



PUNTA GORDA, LOOKING UP THE CHANNEL, SHOWING EARTHWORK
ON THE CLIFF.

IMPRISONMENT IN MORRO CASTLE

lery on the ridge beyond Socapa, opening upon the sea battery from the flank and rear, and making a night assault on all the positions of Socapa, coming down from above on those of the slopes, extending the operation to boarding the *Reina Mercedes* from the starboard side, from which the guns had been removed, and destroying her if she could not be held under the fire of the enemy from Punta Gorda and the fleet. I believed that the battery to the eastward of the Morro could be similarly taken from the rear. The work would have to be done quickly to avoid the massing of Spanish troops to cut off the advance, and, in the case of the Morro side, such reinforcements could be sent down rapidly from the city. On each side the guns would probably have to be destroyed and then abandoned. The main operation, the entrance of the fleet, might begin at daybreak, and I set to work on the details of its entrance and of the tactics necessary to destroy the enemy's fleet most effectually.

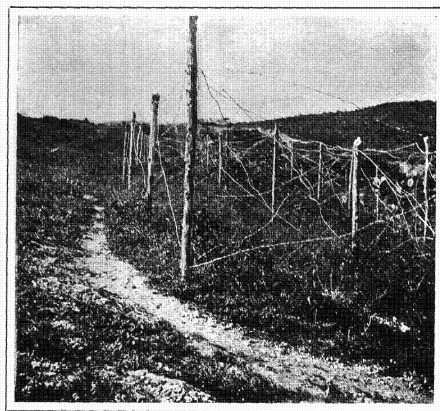
Finally the firing ceased. I came down quietly, after closing my eyes several times to be sure that I could picture the scene with accuracy. I pulled the cot back, put the table and wash-stand and box in place, put on a clean pair of trousers, and was sitting unconcernedly rocking when the sentry returned and opened the door.

Soon I saw the soldiers coming in, begrimed and

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

fagged out, showing that the garrison had manned the eastern battery. Sponges and rammers were brought in, and I noticed that they were all for muzzle-loading guns. In vain I looked to see any gear from a breech-loader. The two guns nearest the Morro on the Socapa were breech-loaders, which appeared to be about six-inch, carrying the regular ship form of shield; and I concluded that they had been taken from the starboard side of the *Mercedes*. The guns on the slope of Socapa were so well concealed that it was difficult to determine just what guns they were. One, high up, had its barrel extending beyond a mask of brush, and seemed to be a four-inch. The main point with these guns, however, was their position, and after the continued observation I believed I could lead an assaulting party to them even on a dark night.

The kitchen, being on an exposed side, had been abandoned during the bombardment, and luncheon was late. Well satisfied with the morning's experience, I had a ravenous appetite, and thought the rice and frijoles excellent. I found, in course of time, that an appetite was the most difficult feature connected with the full appreciation of this ration. As the attendant brought the pans up, he stooped and picked up something from the threshold. "What is this?" he asked. It was a piece of shell that had struck the door and fallen. I put it in my box, and asked him if my men were all right.



BARBED-WIRE ENTANGLEMENT NEAR THE MORRO.

IMPRISONMENT IN MORRO CASTLE

He said they were, but that five men had been wounded in the Morro.¹

It appeared to me as rather singular that the Morro should not have been taken up as a principal target. Perhaps the other work had been enough for one time, and the Morro was reserved for another. Thinking over the matter during luncheon, I determined to make a protest against our retention in the Morro, and, with the pencil and part of the paper left by the judge, wrote an official letter to General Linares, protesting against such abuse, particularly when he had informed the American admiral that we had been removed; and I sent a similar letter to the British consul, adding that personally the experience of the forenoon had been interesting and valuable.

The afternoon passed. Toward sunset a shot was fired from the eastern battery, and the garrison rushed out. But it was a false alarm. The sea in the caverns, which had all along made weird rum-

¹ I learned afterward that two of these men died. As to the firing on the Morro, I was informed by the admiral, after exchange, that he had directed the Morro to be spared, believing that the prisoners were there. Apparently the gunners simply could not resist such a target. My men told me afterward that, as soon as the bombardment began, the Spaniards hoisted a big Spanish flag on the lightning-rod over my cell, which my men could see from their cell. The regular flagpole is on the other side of the fort, and so far as I could learn a flag had not been hoisted on the lightning-rod before and was not afterward. Evidently the shots that kept passing over my head were efforts to bring down the flag, and it was probably one of these that killed the men.

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

blings, resounded like the shock of a heavy projectile, and again and again, until I went to sleep, there would be the startling sensation of reopening the bombardment, which each time would require the reassurance of my reason that it was only the sea.

About ten or eleven o'clock my door was thrown open, and an officer appeared in boots and spurs, covered with mud, showing under the dim light carried by an orderly.

"I have come," he said, "from General Linares, who has directed that the prisoners be transferred to Santiago, to start at daylight to-morrow."

"Very well," I replied; "have my men informed, and we shall be ready."

"The general wishes you to understand, however," the officer continued, "that this action is not due to your protest of this afternoon."

I did not reply, but smiled to myself as the officer left.

PART IV

PRISON LIFE IN SANTIAGO AND OBSERVATIONS OF THE SIEGE

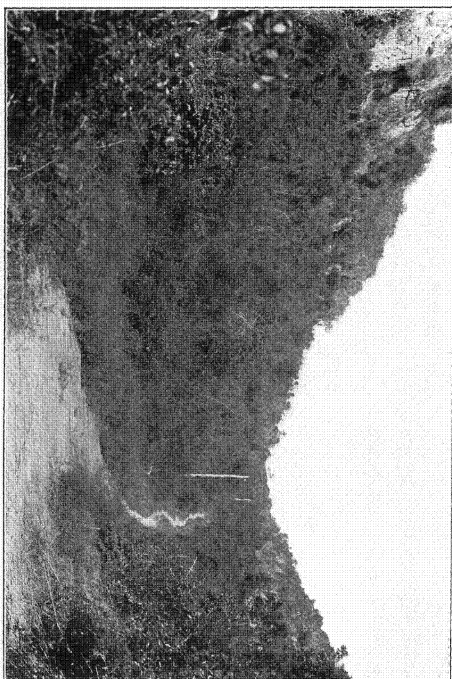
The tramp from the Morro to Santiago—The new prison—The writer's comfortable quarters—A visit from the British consul—Sad news of Acosta—First tidings from home—The first meal in the new quarters—A bit of child life—The first night—Protests against the treatment of the crew—Boxing-gloves and reading-matter—Plans for escape—Despair of being exchanged—The Spanish soldier and his horse—Brutality to dogs—Studying the military situation—The question of health—Nature from a prison window—The British consul's attentions—His noble character—First sight of the Stars and Stripes—Two ruses—The battles of July 1 (El Caney and San Juan)—Notes of the fighting of July 2—July 3: hearing the guns of the fleets—July 4: non-combatants leaving—A bold request—Exchange at last—A lamented enemy—Good-bys—A singular cavalcade—Through the lines—Back to the flagship.

BY sunrise next morning (Tuesday, June 7) we were off for Santiago. I found my men waiting under the entrance archway, and I formed them in column of twos, and we marched out with military step, a guard of about thirty soldiers with us under the command of a lieutenant, one third in front

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

and the rest behind. We broke step on the hillside, and filed down the same path by which we had come up. I had already decided which features of the harbor defense I would observe with special care as we passed; but upon arriving at the head of Estrella Cove, to my surprise and disappointment, the leaders turned inland. It was evident that we were not to be taken up by boat through the harbor, as I had expected, but were to tramp up by dirt road. I asked Murphy if his hip gave him any trouble, and whether he thought he could stand a long tramp. He was sure he could, and the whole party started ahead, single file, up the ravine that runs into Estrella Cove.

One can hardly imagine the exhilaration we felt. It is true that we had been in prison only four days, but it had been weeks since any of us had been ashore, and it was our first tramp in Cuba. The tropical vegetation had special interest. There were shrubs and trees that we had never seen before, and we picked flowers of rich color from the pathside, to the amusement of the soldiers, who seemed themselves to have no interest in life, nature, or anything else. However, they kept a keen eye on their prisoners. I measured the chances of an attempt to break away. We had the advantage of greater vigor, and I felt we could make a dash and overpower and disarm an equal number, or perhaps the ten ahead; but twenty more behind,



VIEW NEAR MOHED CASTLE, LOOKING TOWARD SANTIAGO.
This was the point over which the *Jefferson* prisoners were taken. The road turns to the left to Esmeralda at the
Juncal where it crosses into Spain. The photograph was here was made of the road from.

PRISON LIFE—THE SIEGE

with bayonets and magazine-guns, were too many. I took careful note of the directions of the path, taking bearings by the sun, which could be seen, though screened with clouds, and examined the approaches on the right and left. The path would admit of the passage of artillery, and would serve either for an advance on the city from the south or an advance on Morro from the north. The heights on both sides of the ravine, however, would have to be controlled by advance infantry. For several miles the sides were almost perpendicular, presenting remarkable aspects of erosion by water, vast caverns having been cut out like those under Morro. One thought what lodgings they would make for ambush. While passing through the ravine we could see nothing beyond the steep, rocky banks for about fifty yards on each side; but finally the mountains back of Santiago loomed up ahead, and soon the ravine drew to a gentle rise on each side, and we caught a glimpse of the waters of the bay. We had covered probably five miles without seeing a sign of fort, blockhouse, trench, or pit; but as the path turned westward, near the railroad, there ahead of us, on the left, a detachment of pioneers was constructing works to bear upon the path and railroad; and across on the right, beyond the railroad, was a detachment of cavalry mounted on ponies—the first cavalry I had seen, so I studied them closely. The officer in

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

charge apparently had something to say to the officer in command of our guard. We came to attention, caught step, column of twos, and came to a halt, right face, as the guard halted. My men held their heads up, marched with a fine sailor swing, obeyed orders with precision, and made an excellent appearance, well brought out by contrast with the Spanish soldiers. I felt proud of them, as indeed I did all through the imprisonment. I noted the critical looks of the Spanish officers and soldiers—looks that told of their interest in coming events. While the officers conferred, the water-bucket was passed around; for though the sun had remained screened, walking was rather hot work.

We started off as we had come up, and the looks of interest from the Spanish followed till we turned out of sight up the railroad-track. Clearing a cut, the bay burst upon us; and there, quietly moored, in dark dignity lay the fleet, the *Colón*, distinguished by her single mast, seeming to have a special dignity of her own—at least, to my fancy, that pictured below the surface her wonderfully distributed armor and her remarkable machinery, combined with an equally remarkable battery. A launch was alongside of the *Vizcaya*, in front of the spot where the projectile had struck the day before, and it seemed to me that they were repairing damages. A fine merchant vessel lay farther up, and beyond her a number of smaller craft. The shore

FIRST VIEW OF SANTIAGO FROM THE MORRO TRAIL.



PRISON LIFE—THE SIEGE

and approaches were attractive, with hillocks and valleys of cocoanut-palms and a rich growth of grass; but above the keen sensation of the beauty of the picture was the pervading thought that the enemy held control, and I looked at everything as though I were on a reconnaissance. The hillocks each had a blockhouse, but there seemed to be no trenches or earthworks. I thought what magnificent vantage-ground the hillocks would furnish for artillery to reduce the city.

The railroad soon turned to the left toward the bay, and numerous dumping-cars showed that it was used principally for ore. But the cars seemed not to have been used for a long time, and there was a general air of depression. We continued turning away from the railroad, and began to pass huts, from which half-dressed children peered with frightened faces. I was making some inquiries about the inhabitants from the officer in charge of the guard, when a cavalry detachment appeared ahead under a large tree, the troopers in the saddle, and an officer standing near a carriage. The officer came forward to meet us, and announced that he had been sent by the commanding general with an escort to conduct us into the city. He was a major on the staff of General Toral, I understood, and the troopers must have belonged to the body-guard. One can scarcely imagine a more picturesque group, or one with more color. Blue predominated, but

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

bright red set it off on borders, wristlets, etc. The colors might have been called gaudy but for a very artistic arrangement in blending. The major asked if I would be kind enough to join him in the carriage, where another officer of the staff was waiting. I asked if he would allow one of my men who had been wounded to ride with the driver. He consented, and Murphy jumped up on the driver's seat. The guard from the Morro was dismissed, the officer in charge of it shaking hands with me heartily.

I put Montague in charge of the little squad, with directions to keep step and preserve military bearing, and we started for the city, the carriage being followed by the squad, the troopers riding along on each side, with carbines on their hips.

We flanked the city toward the east, skirting it on the south side. I could look down the streets for some distance without seeing any building of importance, the houses being more or less alike—small one-story structures with high windows and doors, the windows covered with iron bars outside, all of a kind of stucco, and the roofs of tile. Here again blue predominated, but there was the general light or white effect that I had noticed in Latin provincial towns and cities. At last we came up to the long two-story barracks known as the Cuartel Reina Mercedes, situated on the eastern edge of the city beside the large military hospital. We passed along the front of the barracks, and stopped

PRISON LIFE—THE SIEGE

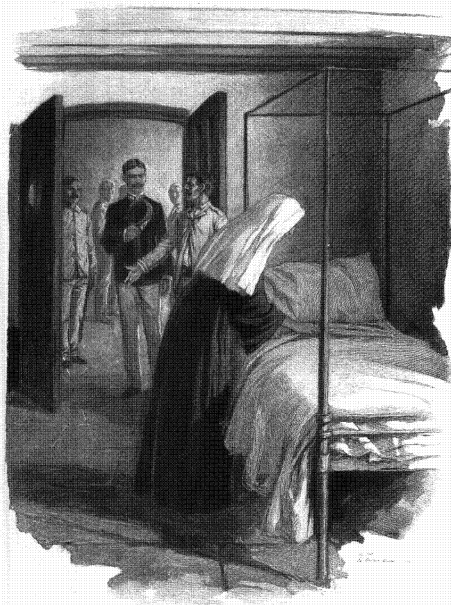
at the door in the middle, the major saying that this was to be our new quarters. A major whom I took to be in command of the barracks met us. The major of the staff in the carriage introduced me, and turned over the prisoners, saying that our effects were on the way and would soon be brought up, I having expressed solicitude on the subject, as a storm had caught us just before reaching the barracks, and my men were wet. A guard conducted them through the entrance into the courtyard beyond, where they turned to the left, while the major showed me into the room of the officer of the day on the right. The two officers bade me a kind and courteous farewell, and the escort left. The major introduced the officer of the day, and ordered drinks for three, being rather surprised at my choice of a thirst drink, insisting that they had superior brands of cognac and rum.

Luncheon was being served, and the major ordered mine to be served on the table of the officer of the day, giving special direction to bring table-cloth, napkin, etc., with a bottle of claret; and the two officers sat by to entertain me as I ate. The major was called away soon, leaving the officer of the day and me alone. I did not know at the time, but learned afterward, that General Toral passed about that time, and observing the scene, had the officer of the day put in solitary confinement in the Morro. I was astonished to learn this,

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

for my host, as I soon saw, was waiting only till my room should be ready. It was opposite his room, beyond the first room, which was occupied by the sergeant of the guard, and I could see soldiers sweeping and washing up, while furniture was being taken in, among which I noticed with satisfaction a kind of cot-bed, an iron frame with canvas stretched across, the frame rising up to hold a mosquito-net. A Sister of Charity came with it, and I knew that it had been brought from the hospital.

When we were through luncheon, the officer conducted me across to my room. Over the entrance were the words, "Sala de la Justicia," which indicated a court-martial room. It was large, airy, and bright, with a big window looking across the road over the country toward the mountains to the east and northeast. It was freshly whitewashed, with an asphaltum coating at the bottom of the walls that, drying, gave a wholesome odor. As we entered, the sister was giving the last touches to the linen. She had evidently been detailed to see the room fitted up with the regular furniture of an officer's room at the hospital, and it was a beautiful sight to see the pains she took to have everything dainty and orderly. As she left, she slipped a little package on the table, a cake of guava jelly. Of all the kindnesses and attentions I received, none touched me more deeply. The



MR. HOBSON'S ARRIVAL AT HIS ROOM IN THE CUARTEL.

PRISON LIFE—THE SIEGE

jelly lasted a long time, for I husbanded it, taking only a very little after each meal. It kept before me the picture of these devoted sisters ministering in hospitals and prisons, and wherever else there is human suffering upon the earth.

The officer of the day withdrew, with assurances that he would be at my service, near at hand, for anything I might wish. When the sister left, the sentry closed and bolted the door, and placed himself on the outside, abreast a round hole cut at about the height of the eye; then came the peculiar sensation, to which I could never become accustomed, of having an eye watching me all the time. This surveillance proved the greatest of all impediments in my plans for escape.

It was not long before the cart arrived bringing our effects from the Morro. The cot was no longer required, so it was folded and put against the back wall. The small table which I had used as a washstand now served for a dressing-table, while the larger table answered for a sideboard. Chairs had already been provided, and with those from Morro there were enough for a reception—two rockers and four or five others. The room was so large that there was no necessity for removing anything. My quarters were certainly in marked contrast with the cell of the Morro, and there was everything to contribute to cheerfulness and comfort. But the fine view from the window could not make

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up for the loss of the sight of our ships and the majestic sea horizon.

I was still walking up and down when a carriage drove up, and a fine-looking gentleman of superb build alighted and came into the barracks. Soon the officer of the day opened the door and announced the British consul.

Mr. Ramsden met me with a hearty though undemonstrative greeting, and I soon perceived in this man the finest flower of human kindness. He said he had received my letter of the previous day relative to the prisoners being kept in the Morro, and had gone at once to see General Linares; that he had seen General Toral, who gave assurances of removal; that the matter had been settled upon the return of General Linares, who had been down at the Morro during the bombardment. "Ah," I thought, "General Linares, then, had been in the Morro, and had left us exposed when he knew Morro was being fired on—had left me up in the most exposed of all positions when by a word and without any difficulty he could have had us all placed in a position of complete safety!" He went on to say that General Linares told him, as he had told Captain Bustamante, that he would not visit me for fear that he might not afterward be able to do his official duty.

Mr. Ramsden said he had just come from a funeral, which had detained him somewhat. "A

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very sad funeral," he added, "a Spanish commander—a fine fellow, who had been mortally wounded in the bombardment—the executive officer of the *Reina Mercedes*." "Not Captain Acosta!" I exclaimed, and a great rush of pain and grief swept over me. Acosta, who was so kind to me! Yes, it was he. The gallant fellow was forward on the *Mercedes* when a shell entered and exploded, killing five men and wounding a number of others—probably the very shell which I had remarked. The surgeon ran at once to Acosta, whose right leg had been cut off at the hip; but Acosta put him away, directing him to attend first to the groaning seamen. There was no hope for him; he lived about two hours, and died with the fortitude of a brave man who had done his duty. I felt a void, a great personal loss, as for a dear friend. It is strange how short a period is necessary in war-time to make a place in the heart for one who has the fine traits of the true soldier. With the thought of Acosta's death, I could scarcely enter into the spirit of the subsequent conversation. We talked chiefly about the bombardment. Mr. Ramsden had seen it from his country house, between the city and the Morro, and had been most impressed, like myself, with the thirteen-inch shells and their manifestations of power, being particularly interested in the sound of those that, striking, proceeded on, tumbling,

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and making pulsating, puffing sounds like a switching locomotive. He said the *Mercedes* had received the greatest punishment, having been three times set on fire; that men had been killed at the Morro, but that, though some of the guns of the sea batteries were literally buried, the batteries had not suffered material damage. To Mr. Ramsden's inquiries as to my wants I replied that about everything required for comfort had been supplied, but that I should be very much indebted if he would use his good offices to help bring about our exchange, requesting him to call attention to the many prisoners at Manila. He assured me that everything possible on his part would be done. I requested that application be made for my men to have the same privileges as at the Morro in the matter of cleanliness and health, and the consul said he was on his way to see them. He made a cheerful atmosphere, and I knew from his first visit that we should receive the benefit of all his influence, personal and official.

Mr. Ramsden had been gone only a short while when the officer of the day brought in a cablegram, sent in care of Admiral Cervera. The sight of it made my pulse quicken, as I divined that it came from the United States. It was a message of kindness from the Southern Society of Brooklyn, the first that reached me; and I felt then that we were

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not being forgotten by our countrymen, and my hopes for an early exchange rose.

I sat down in the rocker in front of the window, and looked out at the lengthening shadows and the softening light as the sun sank lower. There was a pervading stillness, and a sadness seemed to overhang nature. Kind and noble Acosta, to be cut off so soon!

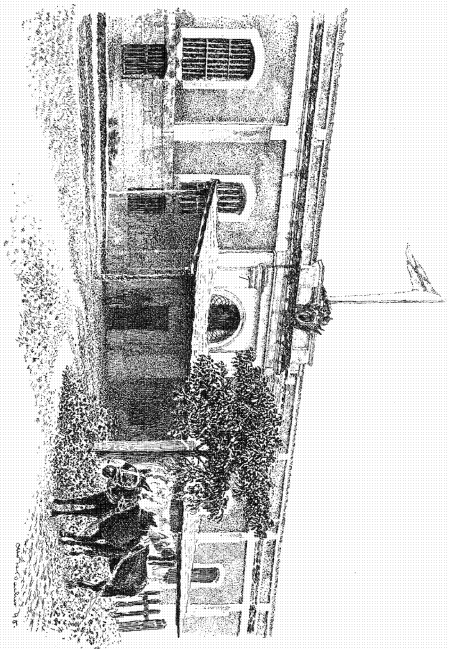
Soldiers came and went, passing my window, which I soon saw was a vantage-ground of observation for all movements and operations to the east and northeast of the town. From time to time small groups of infantry and cavalry came up to the entrance. Some came in, others stopped only for a while; all were only a few yards from where I sat, and admitted of the closest scrutiny. Many officers and privates came regularly, and day after day I would study these groups.

Along toward five o'clock soldiers set out from the entrance, carrying large tin buckets; usually two went together, with a pole between them, resting on their shoulders and supporting two buckets. Leaves lay over them, but it was not long before some of the contents spilled over, and I discovered that they contained boiled rice and boiled frijoles. The barracks, I saw, was being used to supply provisions for troops round about. Later, after the arrival of our troops, cart-loads of boxed provisions were sent out. I was not long in discover-

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ing that the barracks was being used also to confine military prisoners, there being seventy-five or eighty in confinement at the time, and that there was a hospital service in one portion, perhaps for the overflow from the military hospital. These services seemed to be more important than the barrack service proper, the number of troops coming and going varying from time to time.

Promptly at five o'clock a soldier came with my meal, and in a well-trained manner spread a tidy table-cloth, placed a napkin, and arranged knives, forks, and spoons for a regular course dinner. I had him place the table in front of the window, so that I might look out while eating. He put the Morro table to the rear, using it for a side-table, and stood up behind me, changing the plate as required. It seemed rather strange to have a course dinner in prison. There were seldom fewer than three courses: frijoles, rice, and beef, and sometimes sardines; then, for a long time, a bit of the guava jelly; and for a while fruit, which the British consul sent. When the courses were through, the attendant cleared the table and served a small cup of hot black coffee. I would change my chair, taking a rocker, and sip the coffee, looking out over the landscape, and for the time only the double row of bars reminded me that I was a prisoner. Those bars were a great nuisance. One series is bad enough, but two were exasperat-



ENTRANCE TO THE CUARTEL REINA MERCEDES, SANTIAGO, WHERE THE "MERINAC"
PRISONERS WERE CONFINED.
The lower windows on the extreme left is Mr. Hobson's room.

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ing, as the eyes and head had to go through a course of gymnastics before a clear-away channel of sight could be had, and even then the slightest movement set a bar across one eye, and the effort to clear it threw a bar of the other series across the other eye; and all the while an enticing landscape lay beyond.

As the dinner-hour approached, a number of children gathered about the entrance, bringing pails of various kinds to get the rice and frijoles left by the soldiers. They ranged from five to twelve years, and were of all colors, black, white, and indifferent. All had some amount of covering, some full cover, some half cover, others quarter cover, and some a smaller fraction. They were thoroughly democratic, without respect of color or amount of covering, and being comparatively well nourished, were full of sport among themselves while they waited—a most interesting picture to watch. That was a marked day for them. As each newcomer would arrive, the others would point out the officer behind the bars. They formed in groups to look, and the close observers would make new discoveries from time to time. Gradually they came closer and closer.

One, a little girl with large, thoughtful brown eyes, looked a long time without saying anything, and then came closer than all the rest. She was certainly not more than eight years old, but she

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had her hair up, with a long Mother-Hubbard gown that came nearly to the ground. Her face was delicately molded, and with her remarkable eyes she formed an appealing picture. I made a guava-jelly sandwich, and told the attendant to hand it to her. From his looks he apparently questioned the wisdom of doing it, but upon my order obeyed. The little girl's eyes sparkled. But she had scarcely taken the sandwich when there was a wild scattering of the groups, and she ran, frightened, faster than the rest. The sentry at the entrance had seen and given chase. I jumped up, but he stopped, probably not venturing to leave his post farther. I little appreciated then how innately suspicious the Spaniards are. I learned afterward that, up to General Linares himself, they thought that I had on foot a conspiracy with the Cubans in the city, and after the first day no one was allowed to pass on the cuartel side of the street. Two young Cubans, boys about fourteen, who happened to be passing, evidently on a harmless stroll, the following Sunday afternoon, though still on the far side of the street, stopped to look, out of sheer boyish curiosity. The British consul told me afterward that these boys were put in prison, and that the sentry and sergeant on duty were put in solitary confinement in double irons.

After carefully clearing up, the attendant left, asking at what time "señor" desired his coffee in

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the morning. He had henceforth entire charge of the room, as well as the service of the meals, and was most attentive and efficient. He was in the hospital service, and had had excellent training. He seemed to take pride in his assignment to look out for me, saying that he had been able to get it because he knew the British consul—"And a fine man that," he added, with an emphatic shake of the head. He was, in fact, an interesting character in many ways, as I afterward found out.

He was rather small and somewhat shriveled, and showed all his thoughts in his face. He had been instructed not to communicate to me anything of a military nature, and was faithful to his instructions; but he was as tender-hearted as an Irishman, and after the fighting began, I could tell each morning from the length of his face how matters had gone the previous day.

Just before dark the officer of the day brought in his relief and presented him, the new officer of the day asking if there was anything that I needed, saying that he would be always at hand, and trusted I would call upon him without reluctance for anything whatsoever. Thus for thirty days each officer on duty would bring in and present his relief. They were all first lieutenants of infantry, and though a different one came every day, they were, with but one or two exceptions, kind, courteous, and considerate.

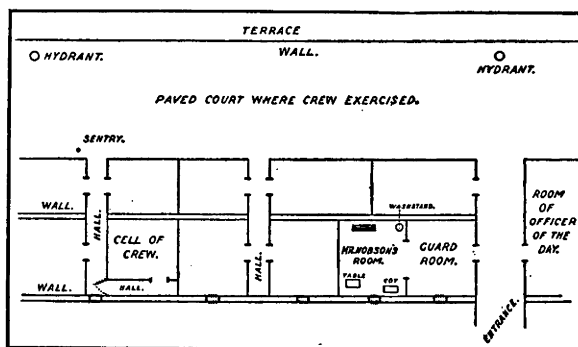
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The lamplighter came and brought a lamp; but I preferred a candle, which I screened so that it would not be in my eyes as I walked up and down, which I did till about nine o'clock, thinking over the change in the situation and the problem of entering the harbor and destroying the enemy's fleet, indulging in vain pictures of early release and restoration to duty. My sleep was sound, and I awakened with a start at daybreak, hearing rumbling sounds like peals of great guns in the distance. It proved to be only the rumble of a cart in the courtyard. This noise, like the waves in the caverns at Morro, so resembled the roar of cannon that even to the end of our imprisonment I would start up at night and require some little time to distinguish the effect of the slow wheels on the cobbles. The barracks was like a great sounding-board, and generally sleep was out of the question after daybreak.

After early breakfast I asked the officer of the day to request permission for me to go with the attending surgeon to see my men in their quarters. The request was granted, with the understanding that communication would be allowed between myself and the men only when specially required. I found them all together in one room of moderate size only, with a small barred opening in the door, which was kept closed, locked, and bolted, and was guarded by a sentry on the outside. There was

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no other opening for light or air, and I feared these conditions would endanger their health if there should be any considerable delay in exchange, and spoke of this to Mr. Ramsden when he called



PLAN OF THE QUARTERS IN THE CUARTEL REINA MERCEDES.

next day. He was of the same opinion, and placed the matter before General Linares, but without effect, the general saying that there was absolutely no other place to put the men, and that his own soldiers were living under the same conditions.

The men were cheerful, however, saying that the food was even better than at the Morro, a portion of beef having been added. Murphy had suffered no ill effects from the tramp, and none had caught cold from the shower. I impressed upon them the absolute necessity of taking every precaution for cleanliness, and directed them to go through the setting-up exercises, a kind of Delsarte, twice a

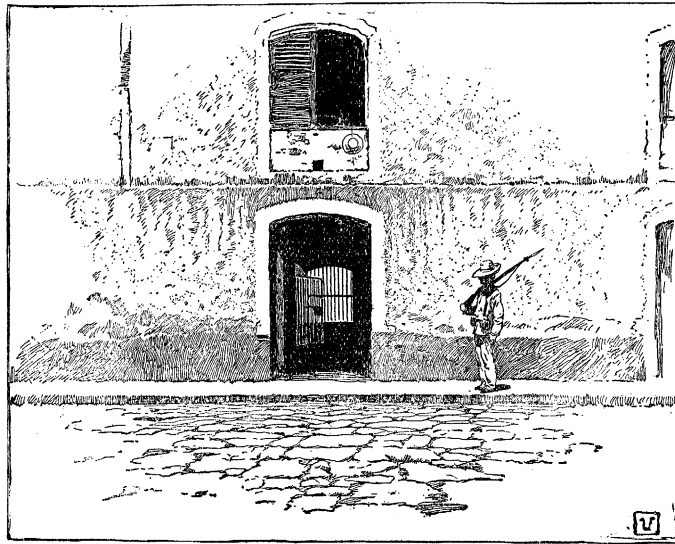
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day. They did this throughout, much to the amusement of the Spaniards, to whom the value of such exercise seemed never to have occurred.

Even with these precautions, I was not much surprised when, two days later, Phillips was taken ill and sent for me. He had stomach trouble with low fever, and I wrote a letter to General Linares urgently requesting that amelioration be made—that if the men could not be given better quarters, they should be allowed at least an hour each day in the courtyard. The British consul supported the request, and after three or four days' delay the order was issued allowing them to go out from twelve to one, the least desirable hour of the day, with a vertical sun; but this was better than continuous confinement. It was interesting to see them, as I had occasion to, in crossing the yard, with a cordon of sentries all about on duty, yet admiring spectators. They made a great reputation for strength, the officers commenting on it. But what seemed most interesting was the boxing, taken up later. The British consul found two boxing-gloves in town, and though they were both for the left hand, the men managed to get first-rate exercise and fun from them. It was rather amusing when the gloves came. I sent them out to the officer of the day to give to the men. He did not know what they were, and sent them to General Linares's office, where the British consul found

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them two or three days later; and it was only after assurances that the men would be less dangerous with the gloves on than without them that the general reluctantly consented to their use. The same thing occurred in connection with reading-matter. The consul, who was forbidden to send



ENTRANCE TO THE CELL OF THE CREW, FROM THE COURTYARD.

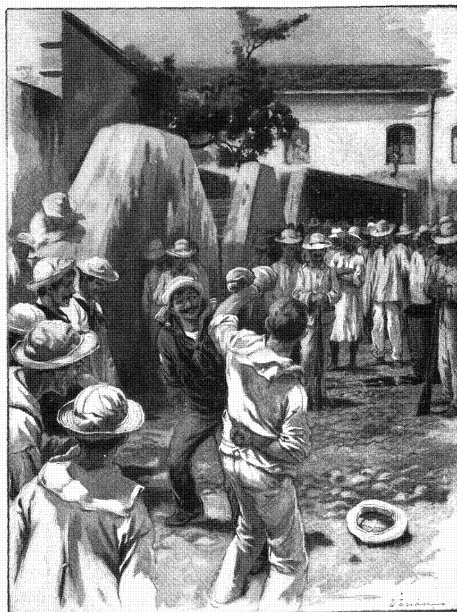
newspapers, sent in a good supply of old magazines, chiefly the "Strand Magazine" and the "Century," and a number of novels, and I sent out a portion of them to the men. Mr. Ramsden found them several days later on the desk of Gen-

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eral Toral, and no amount of persuasion would bring him to let them go to the men. "You can't tell me anything about such matters," he said. "I have been in prison and have tried it myself—marking certain words here and there which, combined, made up a message." He could find no words marked, but that did not make any difference; so the consul had to send a new batch direct to General Linares, who then sent them to the men.

After coming from the men's cell that first morning, I proceeded to arrange a program of my time so as to realize a maximum advantage from the situation. My thoughts were chiefly occupied with our release, the enemy's defenses, and our health and welfare. A methodical routine was made out that continued in effect, with but slight modification, till our troops landed, when the observation of active operations took up most of the time.

Regarding it as very desirable that we should get back to the fleet with our knowledge of the defenses at the entrance, I set to work upon the question of escape. The system of sentries made escape look hopeless from the first. There was a sentry at my door looking at me all the time, a second at the entrance, and at night-time a third at my window, besides the sergeant of the guard between my room and the entrance, and the officer of the day just across, carrying a revolver chained to his belt. When I had occasion to cross the



MEMBERS OF THE "MERRIMAC" CREW BOXING IN THE COURTYARD
OF THE CUARTEL.

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courtyard, two and sometimes three sentries followed behind. All the guards for the seventy-five or eighty prisoners inside were available against me. Nothing could be done in the way of excavation or filing of bars under the eyes of the special sentry. My plan had to be reduced to one simply of perpetual vigilance, holding myself ready to seize any chance, keeping special lookout for the possibility of reaching a horse at the entrance, where horses were frequently hitched. In case of a successful dash, I studied out my subsequent movements, whether by daylight or darkness, whether I should be afoot or mounted, and with reference to the topography. I felt that if I could once get into the high grass in the valley about three hundred yards away, I could, by throwing pursuers off the track, finally get to the mountains, and then, by making a long detour, seeking guides among the Cubans, could make my way to the coast, and there get off to the fleet in a small boat. I studied and arranged all the details to the minutest: how I might dash upon the outer sentry with body bent forward, seizing a chair or chairs to shove or throw, or else knocking him down by butting or tripping; then dodge the first shots by dropping behind a bank and a mulberry-tree; crawl on all fours across a small open space; rush with body bent forward to the fence beyond; "take" the fence and the barbed wire; and then follow up the

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valley in one direction and afterward turn about. But I watched for a chance in vain. When our troops finally arrived in front of the city, and I knew how valuable to them would be my knowledge of the defenses, particularly the location of the artillery, which I knew so well, the situation grew desperate, and I watched for even the faintest shadow of a chance. But no; the Spanish are passed masters in guarding prisoners, and I was doomed to see the pieces of artillery make their locations known by hurling death at our brave troops.

It was not long before the hope of an exchange also began to decline. At my repeated request the British consul brought the matter up with General Linares again and again; but each time the general said he could do nothing—that he looked for directions from Captain-General Blanco at Havana, and that the matter would probably be decided in Madrid. I asked the consul to urge the matter upon our State Department, and he did so by a cipher cablegram to the British consul-general at Havana; but no reply came. Finally, on the 15th of June, I requested him to send another cablegram to the State Department, again urging the matter, and requesting in my name information as to what was being done and what hope we might have; but not a word came in reply. Reason argued that everything would certainly be done, that the authorities

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must appreciate that I had valuable information; but the human feeling would arise, "Why can they not tell us if they are doing anything or not?" Day after day still passed, and not a word came. In spite of reason, a bitterness began to set in—a kind of deep-seated resentment: "It is not right for our countrymen to forsake and forget us in this way." Little did we suspect what a kindly interest they were really taking. On the 18th the British consul came to say that Paris despatches stated that the Spanish government declined to exchange us for the prisoners taken on the *Argonauta*. This at least gave the satisfaction of knowing that efforts had been made, though it portended gloomily for the chances of success. Finally, on the 23d, the consul said that Paris despatches stated that the Spanish premier, Sagasta, had refused entirely to make the exchange on account of the information that the prisoners must have gathered. He gave this gloomy news in a call in the afternoon; but that morning I had heard firing down the coast, and I knew it meant the debarkation of our troops, and felt that a new phase of the situation was close at hand.

During this two weeks' period, however, the greater part of my observation and study had been given to the enemy's defenses. I would jump up at night to see any piece of artillery pass, or any squad or body of troops making noise enough to

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awaken me, and during the daytime not an officer or a private passed without my close scrutiny. It soon appeared to me that in the city there were only three regiments of infantry, one of cavalry, and one of artillery, with a large force of engineers. The colonel of artillery at the Morro had told me that he had eight hundred artillerists at the entrance, and the outer defenses doubtless occupied a large force; but it became clear to me before very long that there could be scarcely more than forty-five hundred or five thousand troops of all arms actually in the city.

My conclusions while at the Morro concerning the appearance of the Spanish soldiers were confirmed by the larger observation from the barracks. What impressed me most, however, was the lack of vigor, the languid, tired look, and the sickly complexion. The clothing, too, seemed altogether inadequate against the changes of temperature and humidity. On board ship we were careful to shift into blue wool at sunset, while the Spanish soldier wore the same thin checked-cotton stuff day and night, without underwear. It was, therefore, not surprising that many had colds and throat and lung troubles. About daylight there was a regular barking all over the barracks, and the cough of the consumptive was easily distinguishable. And during the day, if a group stopped for any length of time, I could perceive that a large

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part of the men had coughs. The endurance of these troops, however, was something to marvel at. When the city was finally invested, I saw them come in after being drenched in the trenches all night, broken down, and scarcely able to get to barracks, and at once, upon an alarm, they would go out again without food, and remain on duty for hours longer. It was the same with the mounts. One would think them utterly used up—nothing but ponies, poor, half starved, stiff, many of them with sores; yet they would go off on a canter for hours, and never break down. When flour gave out, and bread became scarce, and the corn was reserved for meal, the horses were fed on the long grass, each trooper taking two bundles behind his saddle. Yet the poor animals endured to the end, after more than three weeks of such severe conditions. Probably no breed but the mustang can equal the endurance of the Cuban pony. I was early struck by the harsh treatment of these ponies by their riders, but soon came to see that all the lower animals received the same treatment.

There were yelps all through the day from dogs that were being struck—dogs that belonged to the soldiers as well as those that came to find food around the barracks. One of the soldiers, a barber, who stayed in the room adjoining mine with the sergeant of the guard, having more time, went about the wretched business in a methodical way.

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He would go off and bring back big stones and clubs, and lie in ambush, while the other soldiers watched his brutal sport with great zest. I saw him strike a dog passing harmlessly on the other side of the street. The poor creature was knocked over, but managed to rise, writhing with pain, utterly dazed, and turning round and round in agony, while the crowd gathered about, laughing and jeering, and putting mocking words into the animal's mouth. One evening about dusk, a little black dog came up and went into the entrance, drawn naturally by the smell of the kitchen. The barber stationed himself with a club outside behind the wall, and as the dog came out struck it with full force that must have broken its spinal column. Such a pathetic cry of anguish I have never heard. The dog could not rise, and the man dragged it by the hind legs across the street, and left it, moaning with an almost human appeal, while the group of loungers applauded. I could not stand it, and sent for the officer of the day, and asked him if he knew the dog, and told him to send a soldier to shoot it at once. It was difficult to control my feelings, and the utter astonishment on the officer's face surprised me. He was respectful, and would doubtless have proceeded to have the dog killed, in compliance with my request, had it not died in a few moments. "Yes," said he; "there are a number of dogs about here that are a great nuisance." He probably won-

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dered how a man could have any feeling about such a matter.

The observation of the troops soon showed that, though the men and animals were run down and were in more or less wretched condition, the arms and military implements were of the best kind. I estimated that at least two thirds of the infantry were armed with the Mauser, with sword-bayonet, the remainder, to my great surprise, carrying the Remington, with specially long, keen bayonets. The moment firing began I saw that they had smokeless powder and apparently plenty of ammunition. What most attracted my attention, however, was the activity of the engineer force and the artillery. They must have known very early of our preparations for invasion, and seemed to expect that we would select the northeastern approaches, for long before our troops arrived they entered upon an extended system of works along the whole northeast front. Day after day the detachments with intrenching implements would pass out by my window early in the morning, returning late in the afternoon; and I saw trenches, rifle-pits, and artillery-pits growing under my eyes, this inner line of defenses passing not more than two hundred yards from the barracks. The locations were carefully chosen, and I noted with intense feeling the clever way in which earth, brush, and grass were utilized, and felt that there

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would be an awful sacrifice of life if we should attempt to take the positions by assault.

The observation of these military features added intensity to my study of plans by which the fleet might be destroyed and the city taken from the water side. The working hours, so to speak, of each day were given to this topic, and the plans were elaborated in detail. They consisted essentially in sweeping the channel ahead of the fleet by the use of small craft and auxiliaries. The study of the auxiliaries and their use brought out many features of inadaptability in the craft we had at hand, and emphasized the need of special craft, which should require only a short time in construction. The type of craft finally evolved was virtually the "unsinkable" spoken of at the beginning of this narrative in connection with a plan suggested for clearing Havana harbor for the entrance of the fleet—a species of vessel armed with indestructible submerged spar-torpedoes.

Though the conditions of health in the case of my men were not satisfactory, it seemed that nothing further could be done. It was with uneasiness, therefore, that I received report, on the 26th, that Montague was down with fever; and being allowed to visit the cell, I found his temperature high, while all the other men had grown pale, and I saw plainly that there was a general condition of low and ebbing vitality. When Mr. Ramsden called that

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day, we conferred on the matter, and he again made application for changes, which General Linares again declined. However, the surgeon consented to take Montague up on the next floor, and sent me reports three times a day as to his temperature; but when, on the 28th, Phillips too was taken down with fever, I became alarmed. The general's statement that no other place was available left only one other course practicable. I sent for Mr. Ramsden, and wrote an official request to General Linares that the men should be paroled, and carried out, under flag of truce, to the hospital-ship of our fleet, and placed aboard, without communication with any one but the surgeons and nurses, assuring him that the admiral would guarantee the parole. The consul was requested to inform our government of the condition of the men, and to request in my name that effort be made to have the parole measures carried out, if possible. The consul went to the general, who declined to consider the measure. The consul then told him in plain words that something had to be done. The final result was that two days later the crew were transferred to the regular hospital and placed in one of the best wards. I was not allowed to visit them, but the consul reported that the sanitary conditions were excellent, and assured me that the men were in no wise exposed to contagion or infection. Sure enough, they all began to improve. Montague and Phillips were

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soon well, and no one else was taken down. The main difficulty was an impairment of the digestion, due to want of exercise, lack of variety in food, and bad cooking. It was several months after our exchange before some of the men were entirely well.

My own conditions for air, light, and exercise were good from the beginning. I was not allowed to exercise outside, but the room was large, and I took exercise with the regularity of meals—going through setting-up exercises, fencing, broadsword, and boxing, using the mosquito-bar for a pliable antagonist, a penholder for a small sword, and a broom-handle for a broadsword. The chairs answered for Indian clubs, and I would close with several minutes' double-time, remaining in place, and a rapid walk up and down the room. Mr. Ramsden had been able to get me a bath-tub, and a cold douche twice a day, with this exercise, kept my system in fine tone. As a matter of fact, the conditions were better than those on board ship, and I had more muscle and was in better form when I came out than when I went in; so that, on the day of our exchange, the ride from Santiago to Siboney, most of the way at a brisk trot, did not stiffen a muscle.

I never had disrespect from a Spanish soldier. On the contrary, it struck me how very considerate they were in carrying out their duty. For instance, one night I had risen to look out of the window to

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see a piece of artillery pass, and apparently the sentry was not sure that I had gone back to bed. He reported to the officer of the day, and soon a soldier came in with a candle and a cup of coffee, saying that the officer of the day sent the coffee, with his compliments; having had some made for himself, and finding it specially good, he thought perhaps it might not go amiss with me, though somewhat late. I sat up and took a good swallow, and asked the bearer to present my compliments to the officer of the day and express my best thanks and my appreciation of his thoughtfulness.

Even if I had not been engrossed by observation and study of the situation, made keen by both the novelty of the Spanish soldiers and Spanish methods, and the ever-present thought of the impending struggle, it is difficult to conceive how time could have become oppressive with such a wealth of nature as spread out before my window. Tropical vegetation and long grass, spotted with trees, the stately palm in clumps being most conspicuous, stretched down the slope from the barracks, and up the slope across the meadow to an encircling ridge, that grew steep and wooded to the north and south ends—a ridge that I was to see wrenched from the enemy by the sheer individual valor of our troops. Beyond this ridge the tropical growth continued, but could be seen over the ridge only here and there till it reached the base of the mountains. And such

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mountains! rugged and furrowed as by the centuries, partly wooded, but with vast areas that seemed like lawn, which I found to be the same high growth of grass. The sky-lines of the tops were broken with peaks that made shapes suggesting huge creatures, one a crouching lion, as at Gibraltar, another a great alligator. One of the large palm-trees had its fans arching up on two sides, making the perfect form of an eagle alighting.

Nowhere have I ever seen a landscape so companionable. It was as much so as the sea, and had as many moods, varying throughout the day under the changing conditions of light, sky, and clouds: in the morning bright and animated as for work; as the afternoon advanced, growing thoughtful, listening, gentle, poetic; at nightfall reserved, mystic, even weird. The sounds, too, seemed to have the same moods, particularly at night, when unknown insects and swamp animals were to be heard.

What delighted me most, however, were the storm effects, which came almost every day, usually in the late afternoon, but not infrequently at night, and sometimes in the morning. Then the mountains were at their best. They seemed to generate the storms, or, if formed elsewhere, they seemed to draw them. And what manifestations of power! What a tragic combination of the great storm background, steady black, muttering and menacing beyond the mountains, and the bright, mellow

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stretches of light breaking through the turmoil of the clouds and shifting on the mountain-sides! The whole environment was so interesting that, though confined in the same room for thirty days, I scarcely felt the need for books. After my study of the plans of attack was well along, I took up a novel, and finally finished it, more because of having begun it; but I did not care to take up another. It was more satisfactory to give an hour or two of the uninteresting part of the day, just after luncheon, to the magazines, and I probably finished the best parts of a dozen—all of the numbers of the "Century," and most of the numbers of the "Strand," and several issues of the "Ilustración Artística" of Barcelona.

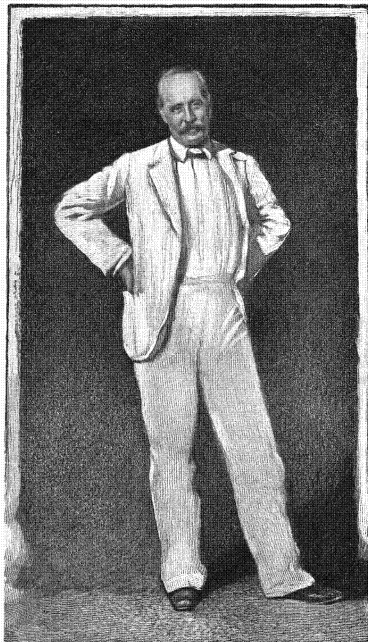
Among the brightest features of the imprisonment, however, were the visits of the British consul, which occurred about every three days. If the prisoners had been his own countrymen, even his own children, Mr. Ramsden could not have been more attentive to their wants, more thoughtful in a hundred delicate ways. Finding we needed fruit, he had the market searched, and kept a lookout to get us bananas and pineapples, though these had been almost entirely cut off. When the bread gave out, he shared with us the crackers he had saved for his own family; and long after the bakeries were closed and no flour could be had, his own cook made us bread from the small quantity of his flour that

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still held out, though he could not tell how much longer the severe conditions would continue. One day, when he had been inquiring about my fare, and I was telling him what we ate aboard ship, the major came in.¹ Mr. Ramsden made a reference to my having been accustomed to eggs, and asked if they could not allow me some for breakfast. "Oh, certainly," said the major; "I will attend to it to-day." Accordingly, next morning the attendant brought two eggs; for luncheon he brought two more, and for dinner two. Six a day, in addition to the regular ration, at a time when eggs were twelve and a half cents apiece! This continued several days, when, as I understand, the hospital steward made an official report that the American officer was eating up all the eggs, that the supply was being cut off, and that soon there would not be enough for the sick. I thereupon told the attendant to inform the cook that I had had enough eggs for the present.

Part of Mr. Ramsden's visit was always spent with the men. He looked to all their wants—kept them supplied with coffee, sugar, and tobacco, sent them two packs of cards, and contributed in other ways to their health and comfort. We all owe him an immeasurable debt of gratitude. Upon being released, I made the matter the subject of an official

¹ This was the major who had ernor not of the barracks, but, I met me upon our arrival, the gov- think, of the hospital.



THE LATE FREDERICK W. RAMSDEN, BRITISH CONSUL
AT SANTIAGO.

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letter to the admiral, to be transmitted to the Navy and State departments, and conferred with the chief of staff, Captain Chadwick, as to making some recognition of these courtesies. It was arranged that after the first opening of the channel I should take a steam-launch and get a load of the best things from the supply-ship, such as fresh beef and vegetables, canned asparagus, etc., and take them in to Mr. Ramsden at Santiago, and invite him and his family off to dinner on the *New York*, along with the British naval and military attachés. Alas! it was not to be. When the city fell, the consul was in the midst of his last great sacrifice, ministering to the wants of the wretched at El Caney. The day the channel was cleared, I was ordered North in connection with the efforts to save the Spanish wrecks, and was destined never to see him again. It was one of the bright expectations of going back to be able to meet Mr. Ramsden and let him know the depth of our gratitude. But while I was still in the North news came of his death. His unceasing work week after week, night and day, under the severest conditions, was more than human strength could stand. He remained at his post of duty, refusing even the strongest appeals of his family, till the work was done. It was then too late; his strength was exhausted. He had given his very life in the service of others. With the sadness of personal bereavement, I hold sacred among my prison experi-

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ences the privilege of having known this noble and splendid character.

The operations of the army and navy were, of course, of the keenest interest. I noted the fire of every gun from the fleet, and as far as practicable tried to judge of its caliber, location, and objective. With a small clock which had come in my box from the *New York* I noted the very minute of the opening gun. The various firings up to the 23d were evidently only bombardments of the entrance, none of them exceeding an hour, and all less animated than the three-hour bombardment of the 6th observed from the Morro. But on the 22d the firing to the southeast, opening at 9 A. M., convinced me, after a short while, that troops were being landed under cover of the fleet. Moreover, I observed couriers to and from the eastward during the day, and on the 24th I was not surprised to hear musketry-firing, more or less obstinate, far away to the southeastward. There could no longer be any doubt: we were invading with an army, and our advance-guard had made contact with the enemy. I decided that the firing, however, came from our cavalry, not thinking that the infantry could have advanced so quickly, and I formed a picture of our superb horsemen, such as I had seen drilling at Fort Myer, near Washington, and our cow-boy riders engaging the Spanish troops. The firing did not seem to recede as it closed, and I was sure,

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though the atmosphere was not very clear, that the Spanish flag on a building where the firing had taken place had been replaced by the Stars and Stripes. My heart leaped with exultation, though I knew that pain and death must be there. It was the initial action at Sevilla.

I would have given a great deal for a sight of the special edition of the local papers which a newsboy brought in that afternoon. It made the soldiers about the entrance look serious. But I knew the story next day when a regiment of infantry came slowly down the road from Sevilla, and I saw a brigadier shake his head as he met an officer from the city. On that day there was artillery-firing to the southeast, closer than on the day of the landing. I could not make it out, but learned afterward that it was the shelling of Aguadores, accompanied by the retreat of the Spaniards and the partial blowing up of the railroad-bridge. If there had been any doubt about Sevilla the day before, it was removed that night when I saw our camp-fires spreading out, some of them nearer than the first flag.

For several days no further action took place, but our camp-fires continued to spread out to the foot of the mountains, and I knew that the army was coming up. The Spanish troops, on their part, were working like beavers on their intrenchments, and artillery passed which I concluded was being transferred from the entrance and from defenses in

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other directions. What gave me most concern was a pack-train of big mules with machine-guns. My intense anxiety to escape with the information I had made me almost desperate. The Spaniards seemed to know this, and watched me like a hawk. Before I would start to cross the courtyard, the officer of the day would call up two or three extra sentries. It was on the day of the landing that Mr. Ramsden had brought me news of the refusal to exchange, and then I knew that unless a chance to escape should occur we should have simply to await developments in the attack on the city.

I looked for this attack to be from artillery, and planned, in the case of bombardment, to place my tables in front of the window, very much as at Morro, and to demand that my men be allowed to go into the courtyard to be clear of falling walls or roofs. When I went in to see Montague, I took the opportunity of informing the men of the situation while still appearing only to be inquiring about their health, in this fashion: "You still have some fever, Montague, and they have refused to exchange us, lads." The two clauses being spoken without pause, the officer suspected nothing. "None of you others have any, but our troops have landed." "Does your coffee keep well in that box, and if shells strike the building look out for the walls and for fire from above?" "Do you get enough air from the door here, and I shall ask for you to be allowed

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to go into the courtyard?" "Let me see your tongue, Montague. It is not so bad, and in the courtyard look out for brick and debris; take shelter by the stone steps." The men understood perfectly, and nodded their heads or answered without any sign of surprise and without a question.

I was rather surprised later to see the Red Cross flag hoisted on the barracks, one flag at each corner and one over the portal. "Do they imagine," I thought, "with troops going back and forth from the entrance, and the nature of the building evident, that the flag is going to protect it from our fire?" I was interested to see what the abuse of the flag would amount to, and after our exchange I found that the guns of our artillery had been trained on the barracks from the beginning of the investment, while the flag was hoisted on almost every building of importance in the city. The barracks was close to the line of artillery-pits—was, indeed, the nearest structure, and would have been the first building to crumble. Our artillerists had seen the abuse, and had made out the hospital and other places to be spared, independent of the flag. There was a sense of relief in the knowledge that the men were safe in the hospital before the fighting began.

Preparations continued, apparently, on both sides until June 30, when a balloon ascended from our lines and remained high up for reconnaissance. I

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took this as indicating that active work was close at hand. Escape with information had continued impossible, and I waited with anxious mind, never doubting for an instant as to the issue, but fearing for our losses.

Sharp at half-past six next morning our artillery opened. I jumped to the window, and scarcely left it again all day, and being anxious to follow accurately every movement, took a pencil to jot down items. Mr. Ramsden had sent a note-book and stationery, but the authorities had declined to let them be delivered, fearing that they might be used to communicate with the Cubans. Whenever I wished to write a letter to the general or to the consul, an orderly would bring in one envelop and one sheet of paper, and that envelop and that sheet of paper had to go out or be accounted for. Paper was therefore lacking, as in the daily items I had used up the spare part of a sheet left in the Morro by the judge. Fortunately, I had put the draft of my reply to his questions into my pocket, and the back of the page was blank. On this blank side I jotted items of the battle, keeping the paper folded twice, in front of my body, and using a very short lead-pencil, to escape the notice of the sentry, who kept his eye on every movement, and doubtless wondered why I would turn so often to look at the clock. The items are scarcely more than words, and though making pictures to my own mind, they

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can hardly be intelligible to others, but as far as they are intelligible they may be taken as accurate.

July 1, 6:30. Heavy artillery opened on *fuerte* eastward and northward. Contains 3 pieces. Infantry fire soon afterward in same direction. Brisk for hour or two. Balloon reconnaissances.

About 9, General Toral and officers, apparently all infantry officers, meet at Cuartel Reina Mercedes. Draw over to houses to southeast, in rear.

Musketry at distance to southward and eastward opened about 9:45. Became general. Approaching. Enemy's artillery on flank opened. Enemy retreating. Advance upon his artillery. Either captured or retired about noon. Pause about 11 o'clock.

About 1, enemy rallied. Two small cavalry charges. First returned at once; second never returned.

About 2, fire with machine-guns to eastward began. Continued rest of day. Seem to engage men in bunch of palms.

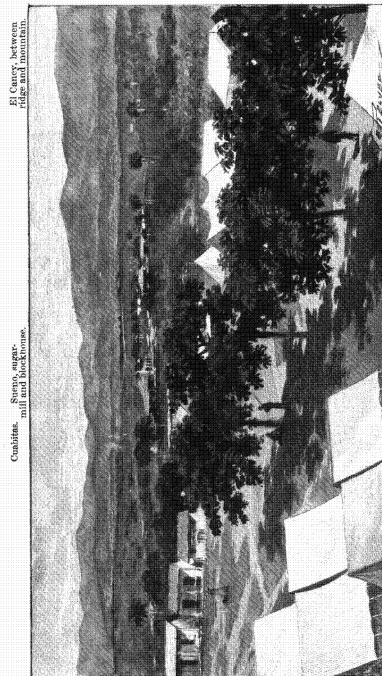
Fire to northward and eastward again about 2 P.M.; off and on rest of day. Supported by heavy artillery fire.

Flank movement about 2. Heavy. Continued rest of day till about 6:30. Machine-guns firing. Pause about 4:40. Started again about 5:15. Heavy—close at outer fork of road. Machine-gun fire and artillery. Ended at dark.

The artillery fire that began the engagement came from a hillock out toward the base of the mountains. I jumped to observe the fall of the first shell, which, to my surprise, exploded far to the northeast, near

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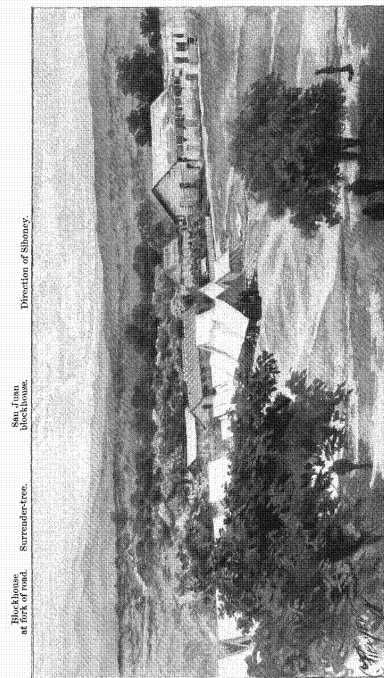
a blockhouse dominating the village of El Caney. It was followed by another shot, then another, each one nearer, till one struck the blockhouse square. It was excellent target practice. I estimated the pieces to be about three miles from the barracks, and the range about a mile and a half. It was a fine sight to see the billows of smoke dart out of the hillock, and then, after an expected pause of five or six seconds, see the puff-balls of gas at the blockhouse; then came another pause of ten or twelve seconds, then the peal, followed shortly by a sharp, strong echo from the mountains behind, then another echo from the mountain behind El Caney, and then a series of echoes from mountains at greater distances. It was not long after the artillery opened that I heard the distant crack of a rifle, then another, then several in rapid succession, all in the direction of the village. I then knew that the artillery fire was preparatory to an advance of infantry. Some shells seemed to be directed farther down the slope, apparently ahead of the infantry, though the blockhouse still received attention. The musketry fire became general and drew toward the village. It continued unremittingly till it all came from the village, when it slackened. It had been a hotly contested advance, but I felt that the village was ours and the north flank was secure, though firing continued off and on during most of the day and was very hot again in the afternoon. I felt all the



R. Cuartel Reina Mercedes, trees and mountains.

Cuadras, hills and mountains.

VIEW FROM THE ROOF OF THE CUARTEL REINA MERCEDES.
In nature a composite of two views, one opposite, one opposite.
They were taken at slightly different angles from about the same point.



Left road to El Capay.
 Right road to San Juan and Siboney.
 VIEW FROM THE WINDOW OF MR. HOBSON'S CELL IN THE CUARTEL REINA MERCEDES.

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while, however, that the movement on the village would be only a part of the advance, expecting the heaviest fighting to take place out to the east and southeast, in the direction of the road that led toward the building on which our flag had supplanted the Spanish flag, where the camp-fires showed our troops to be in force.

I was not surprised, therefore, when the balloon rose up in that direction, even before the firing died out at El Caney. Then, when there was a conference of officers—a general whom I took to be Toral, and twenty or thirty others—at the barracks in front of my window, and troops began to pour out from the city along the southeast road, I was certain that a general engagement was impending. The officers seemed to have misgivings as to the balloon, and drew over to some buildings about a hundred yards away, where they were screened from its view. The balloon came lower and began to change position. Musketry fire started up in its direction, and soon became general, and the artillery began to open. Before long I was convinced that the firing was coming closer. Soon there was no doubt of it. Our troops continued to advance until finally the fire became quicker and more concentrated, and I knew they were charging. Then came a cloud of smoke and the crash and explosion of shrapnel, followed by a sudden pause. I knew what the pause meant. Our men, who probably

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had never been under fire before, had felt the shock and for the moment forgot their firing. But almost instantly it started up again, faster than ever. Again the artillery crashed. Again there was a pause, and then once more the fire started up with greater fury than before. Then the enemy began a series of volleys with their magazine-rifles, while their artillery crashed again, now from the flank as well as from the front, and a fearful machine-gun fire set in from a house on the flank. Our artillery seemed not to be in force. My heart sank as I thought of the unequal conflict with an enemy intrenched and supported by artillery. The victory seemed beyond human power. But still they came. Volley followed volley. The machine-guns swept the air with their keen swish. The artillery belched. A longer pause ensued. I felt the moment to be supreme. Had we fallen back? The question was soon answered by fire hotter than ever. It was the final charge. The fire slackened; the artillery ceased. The impossible had been done! As sure as fate our unsupported infantry had taken the works, against intrenched infantry with magazine-rifles, supported by machine-guns and artillery.

Though the firing had been hottest in the direction of the road, it had extended more or less along the front to the eastward, and I knew when night set in and stillness came that we had advanced all along the line; and though no camp-fires told of our

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positions, I felt that we held the ridge encircling the city, and were working with all the energy left from an all-day fight to strengthen our new positions, while we would be ready to advance from the north flank. The matter of artillery had puzzled and disappointed me, as I had expected it to do the bulk of the fighting, believing that in the preceding days it was continually coming up. That night I thought surely it would be up before daybreak, and from the commanding ridge would shell the inner works in the morning. The inner works had been developed by our fire during the day only on the southeast; on the east and northeast they were still unrevealed; and I looked forward to the opening of an artillery duel at daybreak between our artillery on the ridge and the artillery-pits circling the barracks. To my disappointment, the fighting started up with musketry. Sure enough, we had intrenched ourselves along the ridge; but apparently no new artillery had come up.

Following are my notes of the second day's fighting:

July 2, Saturday. Opened fire 5 A.M. Inner works. Brisk till 6. Pause, and then again—seem to fall back. General musketry and artillery both sides; continues. Turns to flank toward 7. Continues hot in flank—Spanish artillery opening on hillside on flank.

7:45, pause. 8:10, again in flank. Pause, 8:15. 8:30, again in flank in volleys of machine-guns. Artillery on

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hillside. Troops assembling near fuerte—disperse. Desultory on flank. General pause. Major and boy orderly. Vessels' heavy guns at 6 A. M. till about 8 A. M. Lost calf. Captain and lieutenant, stragglers. Volleys about 9:20 in flank road. Machine-guns. Few shots artillery previous. Desultory. Seem to desist from heat. 9:45, up again. Desultory till 10:25. Few shots, Spanish artillery.

11:30, terrific onslaught in flank road—lasted 5 or 6 minutes. Then pause. Mocking-bird. Desultory. Scattering. Refugees. 12:15, another—lasted about 2 or 3 minutes. 12:30, general firing in road out to eastward—not last long. 12:50, another—hot, general. Lasted 20 minutes—then out to eastward in palms. Pause general after 1:35. Heat. Buzzards. Desultory firing at intervals. 2:40, more or less general—farther out to south-eastward and to eastward. Desultory in flank ditch till 2:45. Then Spanish artillery opened on southeast and caused pause, 2:50. Nature's artillery. Desultory firing, flank road. 3:15, heavy thunder-shower. Driving wind from northward, and Spanish artillery. 3:30, firing to eastward. 3:40, in heavy rain, firing in flank road and to eastward and more or less general. Then increased. Raining moderately. 3:45, terrific in flank road. Spanish artillery opens. Bullets buzz—lasted about 8 minutes. Then silence. 3:50, firing to northward continues. Close—volleys. Spanish artillery. 3:58, 2 pieces in northward pit and 2 pieces in eastward pit. Pause, 4:03. Rainbow to eastward—clearing. 4:11, opens to northward again. Movement. Partridge. Light on mountains. 4:20, opens to northward. 4:25, ditto.

4:35, general to southeast and flank—artillery. 4:45,

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rifle reply in pit to northward. General silence. Artillery desultory firing at a distance. 4:55, rifle reply in pit to northward. 5, ditto, and light firing in flank road. 5:05, transfer of 100 infantrymen to northward. Dead pig and smiling soldier. 5:20, horse and bullet. 6, rifle-firing in pit to northward. Echo to southward and eastward. 6:20, ditto. Spanish artillery. Silence. Sharpshooters.

9:45, magnificent assault.

“Flank road,” as used in the notes, refers to the road leading out to San Juan, the portion that runs very nearly eastward making the southeast flank before turning. “Flank” used by itself refers to the southeast flank, or San Juan side. The fuerte is the blockhouse where the road forks.

This second day's fighting puzzled me very much. It extended virtually all the way around from the north flank to the southeast flank, and seemed to go by impulses, some of them violent, but all of them short. The use of smokeless powder made it extremely difficult to make out movements unless they were very pronounced, as in the first day's fighting. The advance down upon the north flank was clear enough, as many of our troops used smoke powder; it was not, in fact, until this advance set in that the artillery-pits close in front and to the north first showed themselves and demonstrated their excellent combination with the rifle-trenches, which gave out well-executed volleys. This move-

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ment stopped with the completed occupation of the ridge. But the firing along the eastward and south-east seemed incomprehensible. At first I thought we were advancing to the assault of the inner trenches, but I felt we would not be so scattering or so intermittent. Afterward I learned that the movements were efforts on the part of the Spanish to dislodge us from our positions. I cannot help believe, however, that in some of the repulses our troops pursued till it somewhat resembled an assault on the inner trenches, for the firing came close at hand in the flank road, only a few hundred yards away. Unfortunately, a row of houses cut off my view of this road.

It was singularly interesting, just after the terrific firing in the sally of half-past eleven, to hear a mocking-bird filling the interval of battle with its joyous trills. Along in the afternoon I heard quail calling, as usual, in the meadow between the positions of the two armies, and two doves flew by, apparently much frightened. In the very midst of the firing, a little calf not a week old came wandering along the road all alone, stopping here and there, and looking about with that stupid, awkward look that only a new-born calf has. It was pathetic to see it, unable to make out the situation, as it finally wandered off to the northeast, heading straight for the Spanish trenches. Later I saw a soldier coming along with a piece of pig meat, and

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then another, beaming with smiles, with a whole pig under his arm.

Though the day's fighting was not entirely comprehensible, it left me in a condition of expectancy. This was particularly the impression from the action on the north flank, where our troops came with the thunder-storm. The moment the driving rain cleared, the artillery in the two upper pits opened on the ridge to the north and northeast. But it was too late. A force of our daring fellows had arrived and had come down to the slope of the ridge with the storm, and the moment it cleared they opened on the pits and trenches at short range. Apparently the artillery prevented the reinforcing of this detachment, but the brave fellows remained. It seemed to me that they were lying down on their faces in the gully of the ravine, and, as far as I could see, the artillery of the pits under fire could not be depressed enough to reach them, and seemed to depend more on the volley-firing by the riflemen in the pits and flanking trenches. The third pit, the one just in front of my window, fired over the others, trying to drop on them; but the fuses of the shell in this pit seemed defective, as scarcely more than one out of two exploded. It was most interesting to watch their firing, all the details of which could be seen. I was looking intently when a bullet cracked in the masonry just under my head, and a horse hitched at the entrance reared and

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plunged. One of our men, probably a sharp-shooter, had seen the Spanish officer who had galloped up a few moments before, and not getting a chance at the officer before he dismounted and went in, probably thought he would take a shot at the horse. During the firing of both days, bullets would come rather thick at times, particularly in the firing down toward the flank road. Some would buzz as they passed over; others would strike the side of the building and tear out little lumps of masonry; I thought two entered the window above mine. It was not long before I adopted the plan of using my pillow to soften the floor, and stooping down so as to have only my head above the window-sill, thus reducing the amount of exposure without losing any of the view.

When darkness finally set in, and our men had not been dislodged, I concluded it was the prelude to a general assault—that our forces on the east and southeast had only been creating a diversion while the advance was coming from the north, and that then all was ready. I could not help thinking, however, of the trying condition the men must be in after two days' fighting and the drenching rain; for the Spanish soldiers who came in were utterly exhausted and forlorn, pitiable to look upon, though most of their work had been only defensive from stationary positions. But it is in such conditions that superiority tells.

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Soon a bright light of large proportions shone from the mountain-side behind El Caney, then another, and I took them to be general signals, and went to bed with the full expectation of witnessing an assault before daybreak. I made all my preparations to leave, and thought over the best method of action, when our troops should reach the barracks, for the care of infantry or cavalry, as the case might be. I had been asleep only a short while when musketry fire set in on the south flank, and the artillery in that quarter opened. No pause, however, followed the artillery blasts, as in the day fighting, and the musketry fire became terrific. I had learned to distinguish between the crack of our rifles and that of the Spanish rifles, and now the two were all together, as if from the same spot. Fire opened on the north flank too, and I thought the assault was general. Soon the south-flank firing began to draw nearer, and it appeared to reach the flank road itself, when machine-guns began to swish their showers, and a supreme effort seemed to come, like a great wave of firing. The machine-guns stopped, and I thought we had entered and were crossing the flank road, and had taken the machine-guns. I thought the clashing sounds indicated hand-to-hand conflict. The Spanish troops began to fall back. Many stragglers came running toward the barracks, individuals and squads retreating in confusion, and soon a whole company

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came back and sought refuge in the barracks. The firing continued to advance from the flank, and followed up the line of the inner trenches. The pit in front of my window belched up, it seemed, straight into the air. The moon had risen, and it was a glorious sight. Soon the firing ceased, except on the north flank, where, to my surprise, the men who had come down the slope had not been reinforced, and the firing was only a continuation of the firing that had stopped at dark. In addition, volley-firing out to the eastward continued for some time longer, as though one set of trenches had not been broken. Still, I did not doubt that the most of the inner trenches were ours, and though somewhat surprised by our stopping, I thought it was done to spare lives that might be lost in the tumult of a night occupation. I went back to bed with the full expectation of seeing our troops take possession in the morning. Twice during the night I got up to see two pieces of artillery being transferred to the north flank, and thought it rather strange that our troops in the captured pits and trenches took no action in the matter. I was utterly surprised and disappointed to be awakened, on the morning of the 3d, by musketry fire that soon showed we did not hold the inner works. Even the men who had come over the hill on the north flank slowly withdrew. "Why in the world," I thought, "have we abandoned the results of such magnificent work last

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night?" This was one of the first questions I asked after exchange, and I could scarcely believe that it was the enemy who made the attack in a sally and were repulsed. I am sure some of our troops must have pursued in the retreat. The Spanish themselves thought so, for, just after the retreat of the company that took refuge in the barracks, an officer galloped back from the *mêlée*, and came into my cell—a major, the real governor of the barracks (not the major whom I had taken for the governor), who, indicating the firing, said it looked as though our army had taken the place. He asked me, with great concern, if I thought our troops would kill the men found in the barracks. He proceeded to assure me that it contained wounded and other prisoners, and that he had put up the Red Cross flag, and had given specific orders to the officer of the day to observe the regulations governing it. He sent that officer to get the order, and he read it to me. I assured him that he need have no fear provided no resistance were shown, that I had only to suggest that he see that none of the troops inside should appear with arms. He lingered in my room, and I invited him to join me in the interesting observation from behind the window-sill, as I did not wish to miss anything; and it was at that moment that the pit just in front belched up into the air, which I took to indicate its capture. The major withdrew with the understanding that the first American

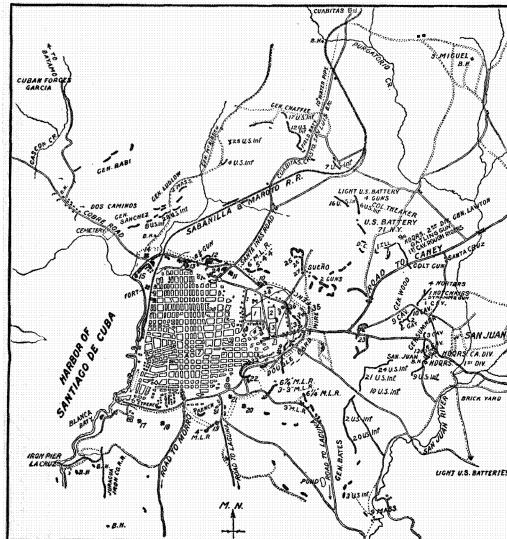
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officer or petty officer to arrive would be sent direct to me. He did not come back, and before I went to sleep the refugees in the barracks went out again.

It was with disappointment and depression that I watched the movements of the next day, July 3. My notes read as follows:

5:20, firing middle and southern pit and to Ed—Sd pit hot—volleys. Silence, 5:30. 5:40, again Sd pit. Silence, 5:45. 5:50, middle pit, then Sd pit. Machine-guns. Silence, 5:58. Soldiers cutting corn in private garden. 6, again in Ed and SEd pits. Silence, 6:07. 6:10, same. Silence, 6:12. 6:18, same. Silence, 6:20. Enemy's central rifle-pits were not assaulted. 6:37, scattering—general about 5 minutes. 7, quickened, especially toward flank—2 shots of field-pieces against hillside—about 10 minutes' firing out to S. E. 7:35, to Nd and N. E.—hot. Artillery and volleys from N. E. pit cease, 7:53. Again, 7:55 till 7:59, and to S. E. Field-pieces went out down S. E. road. Again firing 8, for 10 minutes. 8:12, slight. 8:15, heavy for 3 minutes to Nd. 8:22, general to S. E., 3 minutes. Wounded men passing. Shell S. E. pit fail often to explode. 8:35, general to S. E. for 15 minutes. Silence, 8:55 to 9, then desultory at 9:03, 9:05, 9:10, and 9:12. Shots from field-pieces on flank to S. E. Soldier with piece of hog flesh. The bullet from Nd came great force.¹ Partridges to Ed—good schooling for next sport-

¹ Soldiers had come out and that singed the horse, and looking were picking up bullets along the ing close in front of the window, road and sidewalk that had hit saw it. The officer of the day the wall and dropped or bounded kindly sent out and brought it. back. I thought of the bullet Coming obliquely, the nose had



- | | | |
|--|---------------------------|---|
| A. Plaza: cathedral on the south side; governor's palace and municipal building on the north side. | 10. Fort St. Ines. | 24. Trenches. |
| 1. Military hospital. | 11. Fort Cusbitas. | 25. 6 1/2-inch muzzle-loading rifle. |
| 2. Reina Mercedes barracks. | 12. Fort San Antonio. | 26. 5-inch m.-l. r. |
| 3. Coach barracks. | 13. Bulwark. | 27. Two 3 1/2-inch m.-l. r. |
| 4. Old cemetery. | 14. Fort Yareyo. | 28. Trench. |
| 5. Plaza de Marte. | 15. Slaughter-house. | 29. 6-inch breech-loading howitzer. |
| 6. Santa Ana Church. | 16. Gas. | 30. Two 3 1/2-inch m.-l. r. |
| 7. Artillery or Dolores barracks. | 17. Fort Gasometer. | 31. 6-inch m.-l. r. |
| 8. Civil hospital. | 18. Fort Horna. | 32. 5-inch m.-l. r. and two 3-inch m.-l. r. |
| 9. Fort La Pedrera. | 19. Fort Castro Benéfico. | 33. Two guns. |
| | 20. Fort Las Cañas. | 34. " " |
| | 21. Fort Benéfico. | 35. " " |
| | 22. Fort Santa Ursula. | |
| | 23. Fort Canovar. | |

MAP OF SANTIAGO, SHOWING POSITIONS OF TROOPS ON THE LAST DAYS OF THE SIEGE, APPROXIMATELY CORRECT FOR JUNE 6.

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

ing season. 10, vessels firing. 10:25, seemed to cease. 10:25 to 10:30, light firing to N^d and to S. E. 10:30, firing out to E^d died down, desultory, and ceased toward 11. Afternoon. Stillness. Cart with provisions, as before. To E^d seem to be burying the dead. Appearance of cross. Cart goes out with rags, bandages, etc., some with blood on. Overcast. Continuous. Forces out on horizon E. and S. E. of palms. Growing—look ominous. Distant "pops" about 3:50 to the N. E. To S^d of palms look like cavalry—to the N^d like infantry. Ours look dark—Spanish light. Cartful of rifles goes out. Stretcher-men, like firemen, 5, 5:30, etc. Thunder-storm rolling from N. E. Expectancy. Manœuvers of cavalry, apparently preparation for advance with rain. Rain begins 5:45. Nothing [disappointment]. Mother comes to inquire about her son. Full moon. Some firing away to N. E., as though troops moving. Company of Spanish traverse to S^d.

Thus passed Sunday, and on the whole the day seemed barren of incident. I did not know that it marked an event of the first magnitude that virtually decided the issue of the war. When the firing from the vessels began, which was a short time before ten o'clock (my entry above being made at the time when I came to the conclusion that the firing was from vessels), I paid, as usual, the closest attention, and soon knew that it was changing location. After a while I concluded, with all the sense of ill rebounded, but the rear had ing the lead inside. I put it with struck with great force, tearing the fragment of shell that came open the nickel casing and spread- to my door in Morro.

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luck at being absent, that the fleets were engaging ; but when in about twenty-five minutes the firing ceased, I decided it could not be the fleets, since, on so calm a day, when the water would not wash above the low armor-belt, it would be impossible, I estimated, to sink the Spanish vessels inside of two hours, unless they should come at once to close quarters ; in fact, I considered two hours and a half a small time for the destruction of the *Colón*, and finally entirely put aside the idea that the fleets had engaged. No one suspected that we should be able to set upon the Spanish vessels, in the element of fire, an enemy quicker and more terrible than the water of the sea.

Monday, the Fourth of July, passed uneventfully, but with a deeper meaning as I thought of the work of liberation in which my country was engaged, and her mission in the cause of freedom and humanity. My notes for the day read :

Fourth of July, Monday. Quiet, clear. 7:30, troops out on palm plain—drilling? Another woman to ask about her son. Work on palm plain seems to be intrenching. Small movements of troops. Rain, 4:40. Flag of truce about 5:10 P.M. Gathering of troops at fuerte. Heavy smoke, 2 columns, in camp to N. E. Twilight. Transfer of troops to Sd. About 11 P.M., heavy gun-firing. About 11:45 to 12:30, continued firing at intervals—apparently siege-guns and blank charges.

I inferred that the flag of truce that went out was connected with a purpose to bombard the place, and

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

when the guns opened about midnight, apparently with blank charges, I concluded that it was a warning for non-combatants to withdraw within a given time. Sure enough, when I looked out at daybreak, a vast train stretched far out across to our lines. Nothing ever appealed to me more. Then I saw in all its force that cruel side of war, the suffering inflicted on the non-combatants—women, children, old men, invalids, almost all afoot, struggling to take along some needed article. Not till later did I see that other, most remarkable of all sights, the feeding of this population by our army, when the conditions for its own food-supply were of the most difficult. When, in all the history of the world, has a besieging army ever before relieved a beleaguered city of its hunger,—one of the strongest factors in a siege,—taking upon itself in a distant and invaded land the burden of relief? War is harsh, and must remain harsh; the righting of wrong will always entail harshness: but we have surely turned a new page in the methods of warfare.

An incident occurred in connection with the flight that stirred the very depths of my heart. The sergeant of the guard was married, and instead of receiving his ration cooked he apparently drew it uncooked, for his wife brought his meals. When she came with his breakfast that morning, he met her in front of my window, and nodding over to those withdrawing, told her it would be well for

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her to leave without much longer delay, giving some directions as to taking care of herself. She looked at him earnestly. The warning guns had shaken the whole city to its foundation. "No," said she; "I shall come and remain here and die with you." Since the world began, I thought, it has always been thus. Man may be devoted, man may have courage, but what are his devotion and courage to the devotion and courage of woman!

My notes for the 5th—the last I made—read:

Daybreak. Flight of non-combatants to eastward. Vast trains. Sergeant's wife wishes to remain and die with husband. Soldiers tearing down fences and out-houses; officers' effects being hauled to barracks. Squad at fuerte with Red Cross flag. Request for binoculars and to go to place to see bombardment.

The request for binoculars was made in the morning, after it became certain from the flight of the non-combatants that bombardment was at hand. From my window the warning guns could not be seen; they sounded as though from the south flank. Up to this time I had seen all the artillery, and knew the location of all pieces mounted on the inner works, and I was anxious not to miss any of the bombardment. In the previous fighting it had been very difficult to see the troops with the naked eye, and I had followed their movements principally by ear. It seemed rather a bold request, but I finally

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decided to make it, and wrote to General Linares asking if he would allow my position to be changed to one commanding the view of the artillery that would make the approaching bombardment, and added a request that he would do me the personal favor to return the binocular glasses which I had surrendered when captured. In the afternoon Major Yrlés, General Linares's chief of staff, came on an official visit, to ask on the part of the general if I would not accept compensation for the glasses. I replied, By no means; that they were a perfectly legitimate capture as part of my military equipment, and that I had ventured the request only as a personal favor. "The truth is," continued the major, "the general has not been able to get the glasses,"—I looked surprised,—"for you remember you were captured by the navy, and the glasses were taken by the navy, and the general does not know if they have been lost or not. As to the other part of your request, to be allowed to take a position to observe the firing, it will doubtless be settled by negotiations now pending looking to your exchange." I made no remarks, and the conversation turned upon other subjects till he left, saying that he intended to visit my men. His information produced mixed emotions. The thought of exchange was gratifying, and I should be able to tell our general (I was in ignorance of the name of the general to whom our operations had been intrusted)

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about the inner works; but was it too late for work with the fleet? "My glasses were in the possession of the navy," I thought, "and General Linares does not know whether they have been lost or not!" It flashed upon me that the Spanish ships had left the harbor, and that the firing on Sunday had been between the fleets. I felt there could be only one result, but was in no wise prepared for the news of the marvelous victory which I received after reaching our lines.

As to the glasses: two months later, while we were working on the *Teresa*, they were found ahead of her bow between the vessel and the shore, by the merest accident. I was passing around the bow in a surf-boat on an unusually calm day, and the man at the steering-oar saw an object on the bottom in about twelve feet of water. Our curiosity was excited. A diver went down, and I was utterly surprised to find that it was my own excellent new glasses, that had been "expended" from the *New York* for use in the *Merrimac* manœuver. As Captain Bustamante was not aboard the *Teresa* in the fight, it must have been either Admiral Cervera or his son who kept them, and discarded them before swimming ashore.

It was during this visit of Major Yrlés that I learned that Captain Bustamante had been grievously wounded in the groin, while gallantly commanding the naval battalion ashore in the battle of

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the 1st. Just before going North on the 17th, I heard again that he was very low. Three weeks later I learned from Admiral Cervera, at Annapolis, that he was dead. The admiral spoke of him in the tenderest terms, and looked out of the window meditatively, as if seeing distant scenes with Bustamante. His voice had a tremor of emotion, and I thought I detected the glisten of tears. I closed my own teeth hard, for a leaden feeling gathered in my chest, as when Mr. Ramsden had told me of Acosta's death. Captain Bustamante had climbed Morro hill three times to see me, and had been most kind, cordial, and considerate. I saw in him a fine type of the gallant and accomplished officer and charming gentleman.

When Major Yrlés left, I asked for paper, and wrote parting letters of acknowledgment to Mr. Ramsden (whom there was no chance of seeing, as he had gone to El Caney), to General Linares, General Toral, and the governor of the barracks, and made the few preparations necessary for leaving. The major called again next morning, to ask whether I preferred a carriage or a horse,—the latter was my choice,—saying that we should leave probably in the early afternoon. The surgeon came for a perfunctory visit to make sure that I was well. The attendant served luncheon, the last meal, with a face long and glum, saying, "It is terrible in the hospital." The faces of all seemed more gloomy

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than usual. I understood afterward that the news of the destruction of the fleet had been passed about. I could see the look of hopelessness—the feeling of being sacrificed without any possible result. The sergeant still looked resolute.

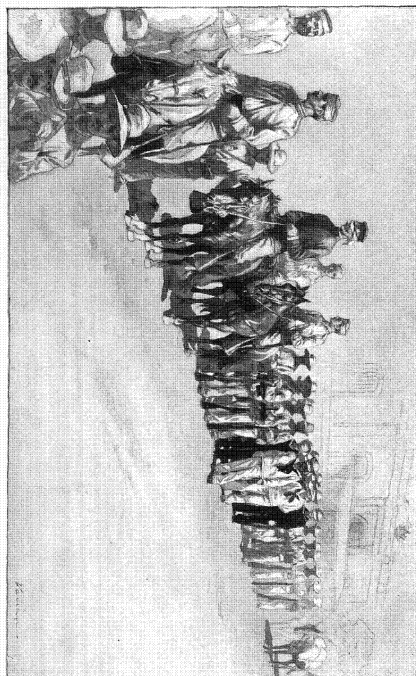
There was a pair of leggings in my box, and I had them on and was ready when Major Yrlés came in, about one o'clock, followed by my men and a guard. The men stopped and lined up in the guard-room. I came out and greeted them. The bright, buoyant look of regained freedom was in their eyes. Major Yrlés asked in a formal way if I was well and was content with the treatment received. I replied in the affirmative, and he asked if I would ask the same question of my men. They all answered in the same way. The sergeant brought forward a pack of silk handkerchiefs, neatly folded. The major, with words of apology for the necessity, blindfolded me, and the sergeant and the corporal blindfolded the men. The major guided me out of the entrance, giving careful warning of the uneven places, and a soldier guided each man, with a guard bringing up the rear. I mounted the horse, after feeling over him a little to make him out, and a soldier led him by the bit. The major and several other officers mounted and led the way, a soldier going ahead with a white flag, and we started off at a slow walk, rather a singular cavalcade.

It seemed a little tame, and I was disappointed

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at being blindfolded; but I kept the bearing and knew just where we were for some time, for the handkerchief, raised up by my nose, permitted me to see straight down, and I had been studying the topography for weeks. As we crossed the trenches I had a good view of the ingenious way in which they had placed trees, limbs, etc., for barriers; but the most striking feature was the vast abundance of ammunition, all ready for the magazine-guns, piled up high every five or six yards along the rear bank. After exhausting the supply in their belts, the soldiers had only to turn to an almost inexhaustible supply. We had scarcely gone four hundred yards when we came upon the carcass of a dead horse, and a little farther on another, and another. Apparently the Spaniards had made no effort to remove or bury even those in the road, while the number was far beyond the capacity of the vast flock of vultures that swarmed on the battle-field. It was an initiation into the gruesome side of battle, as I felt that in the high grass in both directions there were doubtless many unrecovered corpses, each with its particular tale of death-agony.

We must have proceeded a half-mile or more when the major said we might remove the handkerchiefs. We were between the lines. Ahead on the ridge were our troops, the tops of the ridges dark with them. We turned out and dismounted,



THE "MERRIMAC" PRISONERS LEAVING THE CLAYTON TO BE EXCHANGED, JULY 6.

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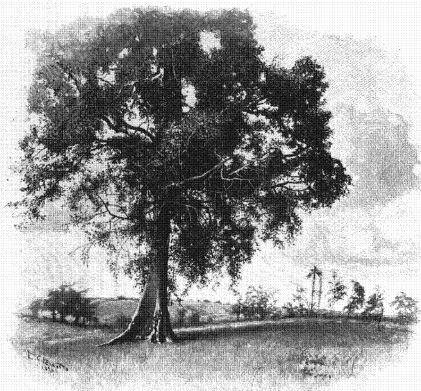
while the white flag continued on down the road. We waited some time for its return. It was a fine, wild, rugged country. My heart leaped as I looked over it. The ridge, across the ravine just in front, was steep, and I thought, looking up at our fine fellows, almost within hail, that, intrenched in that position, nothing could dislodge them. The major introduced the other officers, and we chatted. Soldiers held the horses while they grazed. Finally word was brought that the other party was waiting for us a short distance off. We got under way again, the major and I spurring on ahead. Turning through an opening in the hedge on the side of the wood, there before us, under a majestic ceiba-tree, stood two American officers with Spanish prisoners—three officers and a group of privates. We passed close at hand the squad that came as escort—magnificent-looking fellows! I saw at once that we had recruited from the very best manhood of the country, and all along, in my subsequent ride, marveled to see men with muskets whose faces spoke indubitably of the higher walks of life. But it was not until my subsequent mission to the front, when privation and hardship were at their worst, that I came to appreciate fully the depth of their patriotism.

The two officers, who proved to be Lieutenant Miley and Lieutenant Noble, aides of General Shafter, came forward with a hearty greeting. I

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introduced them to Major Yrlés, and some pleasant words were spoken on both sides before the articles of exchange were drawn up, which was done by the official interpreter of General Shafter, under the direction of Lieutenant Miley and Major Yrlés. The articles were drafted in both Spanish and English, and during their preparation I plied Lieutenant Noble with questions as to the operations that had taken place, and it was only then that I learned of the naval victory of July 3 and heard that General Shafter was in command of our forces.

The two parties made an interesting group under this great ceiba-tree. Vultures were perched here and there on the branches, and sat motionless, seemingly looking with indifference upon this insignificant incident, sure of their due, whoever should win. What was most striking, however, was the contrast between the Spaniards and the Americans, whether officers or men. There was a wide discrepancy in stature and build, and a still wider difference in looks and general appearance. Three Spanish lieutenants had been brought, and Major Yrlés was requested to make his choice, which he did, having, in effect, instructions from General Toral to select a particular one. Lieutenant Miley told me afterward that he had brought all three to give in exchange, but as he found that the Spaniards were disposed to ask for only one, the single exchange was effected. This Spanish lieutenant was



THE SURRENDER-TREE, FROM THE SPANISH LINES. SAN JUAN HILL
IN THE DISTANCE.

Ceiba-tree near San Juan road, under which the *Merrimac* prisoners
were exchanged and the articles of surrender of Santiago
prepared and signed.

PRISON LIFE—THE SIEGE

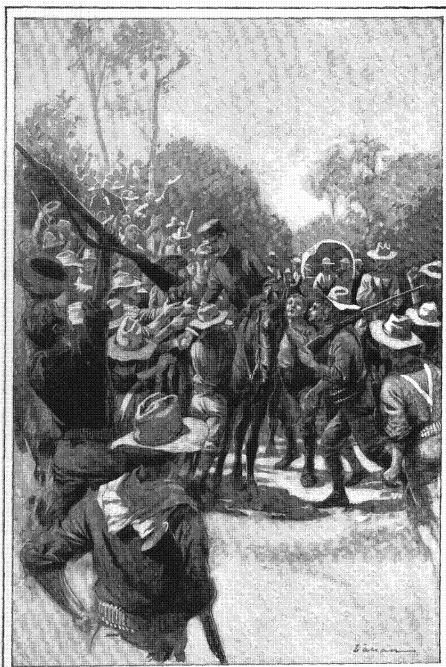
wounded in the upper arm or shoulder, and had on the same uniform in which he had bled. The men who were to be exchanged seemed much downcast. Apparently there was no vision of a happy return in their minds. Doubtless what they had seen of our strength and morale had convinced them that their fight was hopeless. In fact, I was informed that, excepting the one wounded lieutenant who was selected, they preferred to remain with us. It was impossible not to feel sympathy for these men in their dejection. The evidences of meager fare and hard service were plainly visible on their faces and through their dilapidated clothing, for, like all the Spanish rank and file, they wore no underclothing, but simply a calico or cotton suit. Their feeling was in great contrast to that of our men, who were on the tiptop of exultation, with beaming faces.

The articles, when drawn up, were signed by Lieutenant Miley and Major Yrlés, and good-bys were said. The arrangement was concluded at about four o'clock, and it was agreed that the truce should end an hour later. An ambulance had come out to take our men, and I now exchanged horses with the Spanish lieutenant.

We started up the road, the two lieutenants and myself abreast. Ahead of us a vast throng of soldiers stood in the road and along both sides of it. A band started up a national air, then "When

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Johnny comes marching home," and a great hurrah went up such as we had never heard before. Such a welcome! It made our hearts thrill. We saw that we had not been forgotten, and felt as though we owed an apology for ever having entertained such an idea. The generous fellows pressed upon one another to greet us with hearty smiles and kind words. We had scarcely passed through the first press of men when, turning to the right, we stopped and dismounted, and started for a little fly-tent just under a hill. A white-haired officer came forward with a greeting that could not have been kinder had it been to his own son. It was General Joseph Wheeler. He asked me into his tent, which lay virtually under our trenches, astonishingly simple and unassuming, a small cot to sleep on, and a box, not even a camp-stool, to sit on. His son, Joseph Wheeler, Jr., came up to greet me. I had known him as a young artillery lieutenant at Fort Monroe, and was not surprised to find him on his father's staff. I soon found that the younger brother, an undergraduate at the Naval Academy, was on the *Columbia*, off Siboney, and learned also that the general's daughter was there with the sick and wounded. It was a remarkable picture of devotion, one of the most remarkable in history. This general, who with so much gallantry had led Confederate cavalry, was now in the front rank of the Union forces, and with him almost his entire



RECEPTION OF MR. HOBSON AND THE CREW OF THE "MERRIMAC"
BY AMERICAN SOLDIERS IN FRONT OF SANTIAGO.

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family, all in trying positions, and braving the worst hardships. I had felt all the time that there was in the Southern heart nothing but the truest loyalty; the occasion for proof had at last come, the fulfilment of a long-felt desire, and henceforth the fact must be recognized by all parts of the country.

We started on, Colonel Astor joining us, and proceeded to General Shafter's headquarters, two or three miles farther back, receiving the same hearty welcome all the way. It was indeed touching to see the kindly manifestations of the soldiers during this greeting. Some would have words and expressions; others would ask to shake hands; many would say, "I belong to such and such a regiment."

As we passed along, Lieutenant Miley told me of the heavy fighting that had been done at El Caney and San Juan, as seen from our side, and pointed out the positions where our losses had been heaviest. The devotion and heroism there displayed came home to me deeply as I saw a succession of graves along the roadside. Officer after officer, as we passed along, came up to give a hearty hand-shake. Not far on we met Captain Chadwick and Lieutenant Staunton of the *New York*, on horseback, on their way to the front. They gave us, if possible, even greater cordiality of greeting. Captain Chadwick was accompanied by Captain Paget of the British navy, whose pleasure seemed almost as great as that of our countrymen.

THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC"

We finally reached General Shafter's headquarters, and found him seated under a tree. After saluting, I told the general that I had extensive information of the enemy's positions and force, and proceeded to tell him about the inner trenches and their strength on the north and east sides.

The Spanish fleet having been disposed of, the increased advantage of taking the city by vessels and, in general, of advancing from the south and weaker side had become more and more impressed upon me, and I ventured to suggest to General Shafter the advisability of refraining from assault on the stronger side and of advancing from the southern side after the army had reduced the batteries at the entrance, so that the mines could be raised and the vessels come in for coöperation. My words, however, seemed to make but little impression on the general, and I concluded that it would be best to urge the matter through the admiral.

The ambulance with the men came up just before we left, and I directed them to come out, line up, and salute the general. Lieutenant Miley and Lieutenant Noble remained at headquarters, but Colonel Astor continued with me to Siboney. We rode at some speed to make the landing before dark, and the ride was most delightful. We followed near the base of the mountains. They no longer had the veil of mystery worn at a distance,

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but their ruggedness was in full view. The tropical vegetation was magnificent, particularly along the streams. After the long confinement the vigorous riding through this picturesque country, under such conditions, was exhilarating in the extreme.

We arrived at Siboney just before dark. Rounding a bluff, I saw the sea spread out, animated with transports and vessels of all descriptions. Colonel Astor had despatches to General Duffield, and I went with him to the general's headquarters. We were scarcely able to make our way because of the press of soldiers who came up with greetings and cheers. Having completed his mission, the colonel was free, and went off with me to the *New York*. We went in a boat from the *Harvard*, the midshipman in charge kindly offering its service. The ambulance had not yet arrived, and word had been left that the steam-launch would come in for the men.

By the time we reached the flagship, darkness had set in, and there was supreme silence on board as the boat pulled alongside. What was my surprise, on reaching the deck, to find the whole ship's company and all the officers assembled aft! The men covered the superstructure and the bridge and the top of the turret and every conceivable point close by the sea-steps, and the officers, who were standing on the quarter-deck, pressed about me. Three cheers went up, and my heart leaped. Everything looked so natural, and the faces were so full

